

MISSOURI COMBINED STATE PLAN MODIFICATIONS
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
PROGRAM YEARS 2022-2023

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan [13] must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA:

[13] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(iii) of WIOA

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) reviewed the Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation's (MVR) services portion of the Combined State Plan for the Title I and VI B programs. On behalf of the Council, Lori Pace, SRC chairperson, submitted the following comments and suggestions:

1. The SRC Planning Committee, acting for the SRC, had an opportunity to review and comment on MVR's services portion of the Combined State Plan. We are in support of your plan.
2. We approve of MVR's commitment to cooperating, collaborating and coordinating with other components of the statewide workforce development system is commendable. Improving partnerships and supporting individuals, including youth and students, with disabilities to obtain competitive integrated employment benefits everyone.
3. We support MVR's goals and priorities of increasing the number of participants receiving training services, increasing the number of students with disabilities accessing VR services, and strengthening relationships with employers. The SRC recommends that MVR work on strategies to assist them in reaching their goals and priorities and provide updates on its performance at future Council meetings.
4. The SRC appreciates MVR's efforts to keep categories open and eligible applicants in service. The SRC does recognize that rising costs and limited funding may necessitate the closing of categories and the institution of a moving waiting list for services. The SRC believes that any waiting list is undesirable and will result in more individuals becoming dependent on public assistance and increase the number of individuals who drop from the program before services are provided. The SRC will work with MVR on strategies to reduce or eliminate the waiting list and will ask for updates at the Council meetings.
5. The SRC recognizes the challenges MVR faced as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. We commend MVR's rapid and ongoing response to the difficulties imposed by the pandemic. The agency developed flexible strategies to ensure continued service delivery and adjusted its processes to accommodate stakeholders.
6. Recent retirements and resignations have impacted the number of staff with disabilities. The SRC encourages MVR to continue its efforts to recruit individuals with disabilities.

7. The SRC would like to acknowledge MVR's work on the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. We agree with the expected levels of performance MVR submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration and expect the final negotiated rates will be achieved in the upcoming years. We encourage your collaboration with partners to determine a performance indicator for effectiveness in serving employers.

8. The SRC shares with MVR a concern that accessing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities can be challenging. SRC continues to support MVR's efforts to find solutions by encouraging innovation and job creation and focusing on high quality employment outcomes. MVR is expanding opportunities for employment outcomes through its pilot programs on customized employment and peer mentoring for youth and students with disabilities.

9. The SRC reviewed the draft of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council's 2020 annual report and offered full support of the program's performance, data, and services. The client success stories are powerful statements of the program's impact. We are impressed with the consumer satisfaction feedback summarized in the report. The statewide results were at 92 percent and above, which are some of the highest in the nation. We are pleased that the feedback is shared with staff as a resource and utilized for service and process improvement.

10. The Council appreciates the work and inspiration that went into developing priorities for the upcoming program year. During our quarterly meetings, we had the opportunity to work with MVR in setting priorities in addition to the program's goals and strategies. We are excited to see that MVR is not just developing a "priorities" document but is actualizing the priorities through its service delivery. From MVR's staff presentations at our quarterly meetings, we are informed of the program's progress. We recognize MVR's commitment to its culture of support, encouragement, and caring.

11. The SRC had opportunities in the past year to provide input on other important matters with your agency. The SRC provided recommendations on and approval of policy revisions and proposed administrative rule changes. It collaborated with other disability-related councils and participated in and reviewed feedback from the March public hearings. We will continue to review hearing decisions and assess the need for hearing officer positions during our meetings.

The SRC appreciates the opportunity to work with MVR on these matters of importance to individuals with disabilities in the state of Missouri.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

Response to SRC recommendation 1: MVR is pleased that the SRC is in support of MVR's services portion of the Combined State Plan.

Response to SRC recommendation 2: MVR is pleased that the SRC recognizes our commitment to supporting WIOA initiatives and our desire to work with other components of the statewide workforce development system in improving competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals, including youth and students, with disabilities.

Response to SRC recommendation 3: MVR appreciates the SRC's support of the program's goals and priorities. MVR agrees to comply with the SRC's recommendations to work on the goals and priorities and update the SRC at quarterly meetings about its performance.

Response to SRC recommendation 4: MVR agrees with the SRC that waiting lists are undesirable and have many negative effects on individuals with disabilities. It will continue to implement cost effective practices and conserve funds so that more individuals can receive services. MVR

looks forward to working with the SRC on strategies to reduce or eliminate the waiting list and will provide updates at each Council meeting.

Response to SRC recommendation 5: MVR appreciates the SRC's recognition of its efforts to address the challenges that arose from the coronavirus pandemic. MVR expanded its services to individuals with disabilities by adding remote and virtual service options. Staff realized the importance of maintaining client engagement when in-person meetings were not advisable. They quickly adapted to virtual service delivery ensuring clients continued to receive quality services.

Response to SRC recommendation 6: MVR agrees with the SRC that it should continue its efforts of hiring individuals with disabilities. It currently has several strategies to address this priority area and have additional plans to expand this recruitment through the work of the Diversity Team.

Response to SRC recommendations 7: MVR will work on negotiating the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. We appreciate your support of the expected levels of performance submitted to Rehabilitation Services Administration. We will provide an update on the final performance measures once negotiated.

Response to SRC recommendations 8: MVR will continue to work on increasing quality employment outcomes, developing and maintaining strong partnerships with other agencies and providing effective employment services.

Response to SRC recommendation 9: MVR appreciates the SRC's feedback on and approval of the annual report. We are proud of the positive consumer satisfaction results and will continue sharing the feedback with staff and utilizing it to improve service delivery.

Response to SRC recommendation 10: MVR appreciates the Council's involvement in developing priorities for the upcoming program year in addition to our goals and strategies. We will present the program's progress during upcoming meetings. We are proud of the culture that we have established with support from the Council.

Response to SRC recommendation 11: MVR values and agrees with SRC's recommendations on proposed administrative rule and policy changes. Public hearing feedback was shared with the Council, and MVR appreciates the SRC's interest in the hearings and comments received. MVR will continue to present information on hearing decisions and work with the Council on assessing the need for hearing officer positions.

MVR expresses its sincere thanks and appreciation for the excellent assistance from the SRC this year. The SRC has been extremely active and helpful with reviewing, analyzing and advising MVR on its performance. MVR looks forward to working with the SRC in the future to continue serving individuals with disabilities.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

MVR did not reject any of the Council's input or recommendations.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewide requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

3. REQUIREMENTS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN WILL APPLY TO THE SERVICES APPROVED UNDER THE WAIVER.

This agency has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

Cooperation, Collaboration and Coordination

MVR has long-standing working relationships with partner agencies both inside and outside of the Missouri workforce system. The first part of this section focuses on those relationships and activities within the statewide workforce system. The second section describes MVR's cooperation, collaboration and coordination with multiple agencies and organizations.

Cooperation with the Statewide Workforce Development System

Workforce Development System services are provided through the Office of Workforce Development's (OWD) 14 workforce regions in Missouri. MVR is a key partner and works closely with the job centers to provide vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals with disabilities. MVR has appointed a state liaison to collaborate with OWD, and MVR staff serves as active members on all 14 local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). MVR district supervisors participated in the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with all 14 WDBs. These MOUs direct and explain how partners work together to deliver services to individuals with disabilities in the local community.

Through the MOUs with job centers, MVR is the primary referral source from job center partners for individuals with disabilities. MVR counselors visit various Missouri Job Centers (both full service sites and satellites) frequently to provide services to consumers in a timely fashion. MVR is available for technical assistance to job center staff regarding rehabilitation technology and accommodations in the workplace. MVR offices are located within each of the 14 workforce regions supporting its collaboration efforts with OWD.

Both MVR and OWD are using Missouri Connections as a vocational guidance tool for their clients. Individuals can log into Missouri Connections when working with both MVR and OWD. This eliminates the duplication of clients' records and allows for more efficient and effective services for mutual clients.

A representative from OWD attends the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council and is part of the council's Planning Committee, which responsibilities include reviewing the state plan.

Public Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)

In collaboration with the Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB), MVR has written cooperative agreements with all 34 public IHEs in Missouri. These agreements outline the responsibilities of each entity regarding the provision of services pursuant to the regulations specified in 34 CFR 361.53(d)(1).

Client Assistance Program (CAP)

MVR and CAP management staff meet on a quarterly basis to discuss important issues such as order of selection, new policies, best case practices, due process hearings and mediation, performance measures, joint training activities and public hearings. The CAP is a frequent participant and presenter at MVR-sponsored training sessions. The director of advocacy services with Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services, which CAP is a part of, is a governor-appointed member of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council and sits on the council's Planning Committee, which reviews the state plan, and also on the Impartial Hearing Officer and Program Evaluation committees.

Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH)

MVR has appointed a state liaison to collaborate with DMH and the governor's office in a variety of projects and activities. The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council has active and cooperative participation with MVR, DMH, the governor's office and other agencies.

MVR has active participation in the following DMH programs:

- Division of Behavioral Health--Psychiatric Services State Advisory Council
- Division of Developmental Disabilities State Employment Leadership Network
- MVR/Division of Behavioral Health Individual Placement with Supports Evidence-Based Supported Employment Program implementation

MVR is partnering with DMH's Division of Developmental Disabilities, and other agencies, to develop a customized employment pilot program that promotes the specific abilities of individuals and meets employers' needs.

MVR is collaboratively funding Disability Benefits 101 with DMH's Division of Behavioral Health Services.

Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB)

MVR and RSB have a cooperative agreement for serving individuals who are Deaf-blind. Individuals who meet the Helen Keller definition of Deaf-blind may receive services from both agencies. MVR and RSB staff participated in joint training to discuss the cooperative agreement and best case practices developed to outline coordination of services from both agencies. The cooperative agreement provides an opportunity for each agency to serve individuals with multiple disabilities by taking advantage of the skills and expertise within each agency, while at the same time, utilizing the resources of MVR and RSB to the best advantage.

Missouri Reentry Process

MVR participates in the Missouri Reentry Process, which encourages collaboration between state and local agencies to improve the transition of justice involved individuals leaving prison and returning to Missouri communities and work. State and local agencies include the Departments of Corrections, Mental Health, Revenue, Social Services, Economic Development, Public Safety, and Health and Senior Services; Elementary and Secondary Education; Missouri Board of Probation and Parole; and Office of the State Court Administrator. Local community representatives include law enforcement, the faith-based community, crime victims and service/treatment providers.

Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

There are 22 Independent Living Centers in Missouri. MVR and the CILs work together on a regular basis to routinely share referrals and provide services to mutual clientele. A number of CILs have MVR district staff as active board members.

MVR continues to collaborate with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the CILs to provide direct services to individuals with disabilities. The state plan developed by SILC and the CILs details the tasks necessary to accomplish the delivery of independent living services that will assist consumers with disabilities to achieve their goals. MVR and SILC utilize an outcome-based measurement tool for CILs to determine consumer satisfaction.

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Office of Special Education, Missouri Sheltered Workshop Managers and the University of Missouri, College of Education

MVR works with DESE's Office of Special Education, Missouri sheltered workshop managers and the University of Missouri, College of Education, to comply with Section 511 of WIOA. This collaboration ensures that individuals with disabilities have access to information and services that will enable them to achieve competitive integrated employment. The Office of Special Education provides funding and technical assistance along with regulations and guidelines for the establishment and operation of sheltered workshops. Missouri sheltered workshop managers partner with MVR to carry out the requirements of Section 511. MVR staff provides workshop employees with career counseling and information and referral to local geographic resources that offer employment-related services and support to reach competitive integrated employment. MVR has dedicated staff members to assist in the implementation of Section 511 activities.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

MVR and Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) have collaborated to develop a cooperative agreement to ensure maximum statewide utilization of services. By establishing a cooperative relationship, MVR and MoAT can increase rehabilitation technology services utilization and understanding by taking advantage of the expertise and knowledge within each agency. The agreement provides a plan for the coordination of services; for using the resources of the cooperating agencies to the best advantage; to provide information sharing, technical support and training; to facilitate the referral of potential eligible individuals between agencies; and to jointly serve eligible individuals in obtaining rehabilitation technology services. An MVR staff member is a representative on the MoAT Advisory Council.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

MVR works closely with the U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded Agricultural Engineering Extension of the University of Missouri in the delivery of information and assistance for agricultural operators with disabilities.

MVR, the AgrAbility Project, housed within the University of Missouri, and the Brain Injury Association of Missouri have had a productive working relationship for more than ten years. The mutual goals of MVR and AgrAbility are a commitment of delivering vocational rehabilitation services, rehabilitation technology, information, education and a safe environment for farm operators with disabilities. Operating under an MOU, MVR and AgrAbility completed a fee-for-service plan for rehabilitation technology services.

MVR and AgrAbility staff set the following goals for future activities:

- Collaborate with the National AgrAbility Project on hosting joint training with partner agencies, MVR staff, community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) staff, consumers and AgrAbility staff.
- Participate in national conferences and forums on AgrAbility, MVR, and rehabilitation technology services for rural agricultural services for eligible individuals with disabilities.

4. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

MVR sponsors students with disabilities to participate in the Governor's Council on Disability Missouri Youth Leadership Forum that focuses on leadership, citizenship, social and career development skills.

CRPs work with out-of-school youth in providing job development and placement services along with skills training.

MVR cooperates with the CILs in providing services for adults and students with disabilities. It coordinated summer work experience projects with the CILs. The CIL Summer Pre-Employment Transition Services programs provided potentially VR-eligible students with disabilities access to job exploration activities, workplace readiness training and social support and self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

MVR does not participate in state-use contracting programs.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AS WELL AS PROCEDURES FOR THE TIMELY DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF INDIVIDUALIZED PLANS FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR THE STUDENTS

Transition services provide eligible students with disabilities the knowledge, skills and opportunities to make a successful transition to postsecondary education/training, independent living and competitive integrated employment based on their educational and career goals.

Pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS) are provided to individuals who are students with disabilities. A student with a disability as defined in Missouri is

- ages 16 through 21 and
- eligible for and receiving special education or related services under an Individualized Education Program (IEP); or
- an individual with a disability for purposes of Section 504 (individual does not need to have a 504 plan to meet the definition requirements).

Pre-ETS may be provided to individuals as young as 14 years old if pre-ETS is determined necessary by the IEP team.

MVR, in collaboration with DESE's Office of Special Education and local education agencies, will provide or arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services in the areas of job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for postsecondary education/training, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy, including peer mentoring, for all students in need of such services who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services.

Each local MVR district office will also participate in pre-employment transition coordination with the local education agency to include attending IEP meetings when invited, using conference calls and video conferences, when necessary; working with local workforce development entities and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities; coordinating pre-employment transition services with transition services provided in accordance with IDEA; and, when invited, attending person-centered planning meetings for youth receiving services under Title IX of the Social Security Act. To effectively coordinate these services, MVR:

- conducted statewide training to include guidance regarding IEP participation for all MVR staff that serve students in Missouri high schools;
- worked in partnership with the Parent Advocacy Coalition Educational Rights Center to develop a video introducing VR services that can be shown at IEP meetings;
- conducted cross training on services to youth with local job center staff and MVR staff in Kansas City and St. Louis, the two largest metropolitan areas of the state;
- invited special education personnel to train new MVR counselors on transition services within the IEP;
- provided cross training with local CILs to include information regarding benefits planning; and
- is currently working in collaboration with DMH's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) to provide cross training with MVR counselors and DD support coordinators regarding their respective services.

To deliver pre-employment transition services, MVR developed two summer programs, which include a six week paid summer work experience, one for VR eligible students with disabilities in partnership with CRPs and a program with CILs for students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR. MVR collaborated with businesses and school districts to provide services in these programs.

In addition, MVR is contracting with the University of Missouri (MU), College of Education, to provide assistance with the provision of pre-employment transition services. The University hired 43 transition specialists located across the state, who are certified teachers and can go into the classroom, to collaborate with local education agencies and MVR to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services. Eight of the 43 provide pre-employment transition services in the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled.

MVR is also working with Wonderland Camp of Rocky Mount, an educational camp for children, teenagers and adults who have disabilities, to provide internship opportunities for both students and youth with disabilities. MVR sponsors students and youth with disabilities to participate in a week long Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, developed by the Governor's Council on Disability that focuses on leadership, citizenship, and social and career development skills. MVR funds deaf/hard of hearing students to attend the Rochester Institute of Technology for a pre-employment transition services camp.

MVR is utilizing its business outreach specialists to work with employers, MU transition specialists and local education agencies on creating work experiences for students with disabilities. This collaboration, known as Groundhog Job Shadow Month, occurs in February. And, MVR is collaborating with its WIOA partners in providing seamless, coordinated services to youth and students with disabilities.

MVR has a policy that outlines transition activities and services including the timely development and approval of an individualized plan for employment (IPE) for each eligible student prior to leaving high school. MVR will provide for the development of the IPE as early as possible during the transition planning process, but, at least, by the time the eligible student leaves the school setting. The IPE will include specific transition services or pre-employment transition services and supports needed for an eligible student with a disability or a youth with a disability, including youth with the most significant disabilities, to achieve an employment outcome or projected post-school employment outcome. An IPE is required to be developed in consideration of and coordination with the IEP of a student with a disability under IDEA or a student's Section 504 services. The IPE will be coordinated with the IEP and developed within 90 days from the date of eligibility determination and prior to a student with a disability exiting from high school.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

The DESE Cooperative Agreement is a written agreement within DESE between MVR and the Offices of Special Education and College and Career Readiness as well as Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB). The purpose of this agreement is to facilitate the coordination of transition services from school to postsecondary training and/or employment for individuals with disabilities who are enrolled in secondary education and are/or may be eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services. This agreement addresses the following:

(A) consultation and technical assistance;

(B) transition planning to include pre-employment transition services, focusing on competitive integrated employment outcomes;

(C) roles and responsibilities and financial obligations;

(D) outreach and identification; and

(E) work-based learning experiences to include programs like Project Search.

The agreement also describes the coordination of efforts to satisfy documentation requirements regarding subminimum wage.

Collaboration may occur as a part of the Missouri Interagency Transition Team, described below.

Information may be provided regarding pre-employment transition services, MVR eligibility, and MVR transition services, as well as employment, the exploration of postsecondary training programs, and connections to community agencies/resources that may be appropriate for transition planning.

Information may be provided regarding collaboration with the local education agency (LEA) on work experience opportunities, such as internships, apprenticeships and employer-driven skills training.

Individual consultation and technical assistance may also be provided by MVR during an IEP or 504 meeting, during a person-centered planning meeting, etc. Consultation and technical assistance may occur in person, by conference call, video conferencing or by some other agreed upon means.

Special Education Advisory Panel

DESE appointed an advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for youth and students with disabilities in the state. The advisory panel is appointed by the commissioner of DESE and includes an MVR assistant director of transition and section 511 services. Other members include:

- parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26)
- individuals with disabilities
- teachers
- representatives of higher education institutions that prepare special education and related services personnel
- state and local education officials
- representatives of other state agencies involved in the purchase or delivery of related services
- administrators of programs for children with disabilities
- state agencies' representatives who provide services to children with disabilities including foster care and juvenile and adult corrections
- representatives of private schools and public charter schools
- vocational, community or business organizations
- representative of Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services

Missouri Connections

Missouri Connections is a web-based career exploration tool to assist Missourians in determining their career interests, explore employment opportunities, set up career plans and establish job search strategies and resources. Sponsored by DESE, Missouri Connections is free of charge to students, parents, guidance counselors, educators and jobseekers. Through Missouri Connections, OWD, Department of Higher Education, MVR and local school districts can utilize the same career planning tool with their clients/students. In addition to general career exploration/resource sharing, students/jobseekers may also develop a career portfolio by creating a unique username/password that will allow them to login and save information regarding their specific career interests, job search, resume, etc. Students/jobseekers who are receiving services through one or more of the above entities may also choose to share their login information thus eliminating the duplication of clients' records and allowing for more efficient and effective services for mutual clients.

Missouri Interagency Transition Team (MITT)

MITT was formed through the Office of Special Education and includes members representing state-level agencies, including MVR, across Missouri who have an interest in improving post-secondary outcomes for youth with disabilities. MITT meets to collaborate, break down service barriers, share resources, improve overall systems of service and improve data sharing among agencies. The team is in the process of developing interagency training.

The director of transition and section 511 services is on the MITT and works closely with other MVR management staff to disseminate information and provide technical assistance to improve transition services and outcomes in Missouri. Two full-time assistant directors of transition/section 511 services each have a territory and work directly with MVR staff to provide regional support and guidance and coordinate services.

Missouri Parent Training Act and Information Center (MPACT)

Missouri Parents Act (MPACT) is Missouri's only Parent Training and Information center. It provides training and information to parents of students with disabilities from birth through age 26. A representative of MVR's supervisory staff is an active member of the MPACT Board. In addition, a representative of MPACT serves as a member of the State Rehabilitation Council.

MVR and MPACT collaborate on projects to assist students and youth with disabilities in reaching their full potential by developing Regional Transition Networks that include stakeholders from the areas of employment, independent living, education, and the community. These stakeholders create sustainable groups with goals based on the individual needs of the local network and create projects and outreach opportunities that improve life after high school for students and youth with disabilities. The needs of all students and youth with disabilities are considered, including the unique circumstances of justice-involved, foster, and adopted youth.

Project Search and Other Employer-Based Transition Training Programs

Project Search is a one-year, employer-led internship opportunity for VR eligible youth with cognitive/intellectual disabilities. It provides employability skills training and workplace internships for individuals with the most significant disabilities particularly students transitioning from high school to adult life. MVR is one of five required partners in the Project Search model. The other required partners are education, a CRP, a long-term provider (follow-along) and business. The first Project Search site was in St. Charles County and included a collaboration of St. Charles County school districts. In addition to the Project Search programs, MVR is partnering with the Kansas City Public School District, Park Hill School District, Liberty

School District and St. Joseph School District to provide similar employer-based transition training programs prior to high school graduation for eligible students with most significant disabilities. MVR district offices and counselors that serve each of these schools serve on an executive management team. MVR has made a commitment to assist with referrals and partial funding for training for MVR eligible youth to participate in these programs. In addition, through the supported employment program model, MVR is also working in partnership with CRPs and school districts in Hannibal, Kansas City, and Columbia to provide services for youth with disabilities through their employer-led work experience programs.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

MVR will provide for the development of the IPE as early as possible during the transition planning process, but, at least, by the time the eligible student leaves the school setting. The IPE will include specific transition services or pre-employment transition services and supports needed for an eligible student with a disability or a youth with a disability, including youth with the most significant disabilities, to achieve an employment outcome or projected post-school employment outcome. An IPE is required to be developed in consideration of and coordination with the IEP of a student with a disability under IDEA or a student's Section 504 services. The IPE will be developed within 90 days from the date of eligibility determination and prior to a student with a disability exiting from high school.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

The Office of Special Education shall monitor school districts in their responsibility to allocate resources and provide transition services under IDEA to students with disabilities while they are still enrolled in the secondary school setting. The LEA is primarily responsible for providing transition-related services while youth are still enrolled in the secondary school setting. Nothing under WIOA or Title I of the Rehabilitation Act shall be construed as reducing an LEA's obligation under the IDEA to provide or pay for transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities.

It is the LEA's responsibility to allocate the resources to implement the services agreed upon in the IEP. If an outside agency fails to provide agreed upon services in the IEP, it is the LEA's responsibility to reconvene the IEP team to determine how these services might now be provided. The LEA is not responsible for providing and paying for those services that another agency agreed to, but failed to provide.

In collaboration with the IEP team, the special education teacher's role in transition includes

- providing specific information regarding the individual's strengths, past achievements, and current progress in school;
- discussing and identifying courses which address the student's selected program of study and work experiences that might be beneficial given the individual's interests and identifying any strategies or accommodations/modifications to access the general curriculum;

- referring students with disabilities who may be potentially eligible for VR services, and are in need of those services, to the pre-employment transition specialist as identified in Section III. Transition Planning above; and
- linking students with disabilities and their families to appropriate postsecondary services, supports, adult services agencies or programs, such as MVR, prior to the student's graduation or exit from high school.

Vocational rehabilitation services are individualized and based upon the needs and employment goal of each eligible youth. Therefore, some services may only be provided during the final year of high school or after the individual graduates or exits the secondary school setting.

The LEA is primarily responsible for providing and paying for those services related to transition planning for educational purposes while the student is still in school. MVR is primarily responsible for the cost of transition planning for employment purposes. In some cases, MVR and the LEA share responsibilities for the provision of transition services, which sometimes requires sharing the financial responsibility of providing services within the parameters of both the Rehabilitation Act and IDEA.

If there is a dispute between the student/client and the LEA regarding his/her IEP, the student will follow the process provided for in the LEA's school board adopted policy for this purpose. If there is a dispute between the student/client and MVR regarding his/her IPE, the student will follow the process provided for in MVR regulations and procedure.

Most MVR services are provided at no cost to the youth and the youth's family; however, payment for some MVR services is based on individual and family income/resources and the ability to pay for costs associated with a specific service. Comparable services may be used prior to the provision of transition services.

When a student with a disability is both in school and has an IPE with MVR, the cost of services necessary for both the student's education and for the student to become employed, will be delineated between the LEA in terms of what accommodation the student needs to complete his/her high school coursework and MVR in terms of what the student requires to attain employment per the student's IPE.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

MVR counselors will provide outreach to and identification of students with disabilities in need of transition services. Students are not required to have an open case with MVR to participate in outreach activities.

MVR will inform education staff, students, and as appropriate, families, and other authorized representatives about pre-employment transition services and the general vocational rehabilitation program and may include at a minimum the following:

- Purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program
- MVR eligibility requirements
- Application procedures
- Scope and services that may be provided to an eligible and a potentially eligible individual

Specific outreach activities may include, but are not limited to, attendance at IEP and transition planning meetings, area career fairs, back-to-school nights, group presentations, transition fairs, and other events where information about the vocational rehabilitation program may be shared.

A referral to MVR may be initiated by school district personnel, by youth self-referral, by a family member, or by other educational or community resource agency or organization. Referral to MVR should be based upon the youth's individual employment-related needs.

Outreach activities conducted by MVR should facilitate timely referrals. The vocational rehabilitation counselor will work with the LEA to develop a referral packet for students/families, and to identify application procedures that will enable the counselor to act quickly in obtaining written parent or guardian consent to meet with the student, open a case, and proceed with an eligibility determination.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

MVR enters into cooperative written agreements with nonprofit, private CRPs to provide services on a fee-for-service basis to individuals with disabilities. MVR does not own or operate any of the programs. The CRP must be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) or other approved accreditation entities as specified in the agreement. All CRPs must agree to the provisions of and sign the cooperative agreement with MVR prior to providing services to MVR consumers. CRPs provide services which may include job development, supported employment, employment skills training, employment services and employment transition services for individuals with disabilities. All CRP programs emphasize community integrated competitive employment.

MVR district offices meet with local CRPs to outline joint activities assisting mutual consumers in reaching employment outcomes. MVR and CRP staff offer input on service delivery processes and develop action plans to improve those processes. Other collaborative activities involve joint training programs.

In 2021, MVR held four virtual CRP/MVR summits statewide. MVR staff and CRP direct services staff attended the meetings. The purpose of the summits was to enhance communication, promote partnering, share best practices, gather feedback and provide joint training. MVR and the Individual Placement Support (IPS) Services Team held several IPS summits.

Multiple ad hoc teams composed of MVR and CRP staff work together developing new ideas and designing processes to successfully support and implement those new ideas. A CRP-MVR team was created to assess service overlap between the Department of Mental Health's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD) and CRPs. The team identified ways to braid services to pilot customized employment (CE) as a new service category in Missouri. In addition, this team mapped out a strategic training plan to include both on- and off- site technical assistance and recently implemented the first phase of this training with intentions to begin CE services in the near future. These activities actualize the MVR operating principle of continuously evaluating its processes.

The CRP-MVR team reviews and updates goals and priorities within the CRP-MVR agreement. Through collaborative efforts, MVR and CRP partners have strengthened the requirements for CRPs who want to provide Employment Services Plus in the areas of deaf/hard of hearing, brain injury, and/or autism spectrum disorder.

Collaboration and partnership continue to be cornerstones of the relationship between MVR and CRPs in Missouri and have created an environment of creativity and innovation. The CRP-MVR steering committee meets regularly to review progress on projects, service delivery and to discuss current and future issues warranting attention.

MVR fosters cooperation and partnership with the Department of Mental Health's Behavioral Health Division through a statewide collaborative, which is a steering team comprised of both agencies to direct the collaborative efforts to serve individuals with severe and persistent mental illness.

MVR has signed cooperative agreements with 32 nonprofit Community Mental Health Centers, which provide IPS services to MVR clients.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

As indicated in section (e), MVR enters into cooperative written agreements with CRPs to provide services on a fee-for-service basis to individuals with disabilities, which includes youth with the most significant disabilities. Ad hoc teams composed of MVR and CRP staff worked together developing new ideas and designing processes to successfully support and implement those new ideas. The CRP-MVR steering committee meets regularly to improve services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities who are receiving supported employment services.

The CRPs provide SE services, which may include:

- job supports;
- job accommodations;
- workplace natural supports;
- facilitation of social inclusion in the workplace;
- provision of long-term, extended services support with the individual or employer a minimum of twice per month; and
- customized employment for individuals and employers.

As indicated in section (e), MVR has signed cooperative agreements with 32 nonprofit CMHCs to provide IPS services, as well as extended services, to MVR clients including youth with serious mental illnesses in several sites.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

MVR continually reviews its strategies to develop new employer relationships and support businesses that employ individuals with disabilities. Some of its flexible strategies include increasing work-based learning opportunities, on-the-job training, internships, apprenticeships and customized employment. In addition, MVR works with employers to ensure they have resources for necessary workplace accommodations and rehabilitation technology.

MVR is reviewing its internal processes to work more effectively with employers and WIOA partners. MVR customizes its services to meet the needs of business. It has several employer projects underway. MVR is partnering with multiple employers to provide a work-based learning opportunity for individuals with disabilities. It is also working with various businesses to assist in their recruitment and interview process for applicants with disabilities. One tool being utilized with this purpose in mind is the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP). TAP is a collaboration with businesses to assist them in finding candidates with disabilities and connecting them with available job openings.

MVR has built partnerships with most major healthcare systems in Missouri to assist individuals with disabilities connect with hospital job openings, job shadowing, and conversations with human resource staff to help MVR clients explore job options.

For several years, MVR has collaborated with workforce partners, CRPs and other agencies to plan and market events to assist employers with their inclusion initiatives. Rather than traditional job fairs where jobseekers meet with employers, MVR clients have booths for employers to visit. They create displays to showcase their talents, skills and abilities. Held at various locations around the state, these events are popular with clients and employers and continue to grow in number.

Workforce Development Boards host annual inclusion events. MVR assists with the planning and participates at these events, which focus on providing employers with relevant information on the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities. Presentations range from businesses sharing their successes on becoming more inclusive to individuals with disabilities sharing their employment journeys.

In order to meet business needs, MVR developed business outreach specialist positions that provide statewide coverage at local and state levels. Business outreach specialists work with labor market information to support both business and MVR staff needs. These specialists not only offer outreach to employers and businesses, they also work with WIOA partners to develop employment collaboratives creating a central point of contact among agencies. These collaboratives, known as NEXUS groups, are across the state. They focus on connecting candidates with barriers to employment to business partners through meetings, planned events and panel discussions.

MVR has representatives on regional WIOA business services teams. The teams work with local Chambers of Commerce, local educational agencies, local and state economic developers, regional planning commissions, human resource groups and other business organizations to determine employer needs in workforce regions across the state. MVR and the Office of Workforce Development have initiated an employer survey. Feedback is used to assess how to better serve businesses' needs.

MVR has statewide involvement with the Department Labor and WIOA partners regarding apprenticeship development. MVR is represented on the Missouri Apprenticeship Team with other partners ensuring it stays abreast of all apprenticeship opportunities statewide to connect MVR jobseekers to opportunities for competitive integrated employment. The agency actively markets the new apprenticeship portal, www.moapprenticeconnect.com, created by the

Chamber of Commerce with the goal of making connections between apprentices and apprenticeships. MVR's assistant commissioner is a member of the Office of Apprenticeship and Work-based Learning Council along with representatives from other partner agencies.

MVR is working with apprenticeship sponsor Abilities First Employment Services to connect candidates with jobs in areas including clerical, information technology, retail, culinary, environmental services, facilities management and material handling. MVR may provide short-term, individualized job coaching through Abilities First. Multiple clients participating in this pilot have obtained employment and started their apprenticeships. In the St. Louis area, multiple MVR clients have been selected for or completed a certified nursing assistant registered apprenticeship program that is a partnership between St. Louis Training and Applied Technology Services (A Division of Special School District), the Department of Labor, Missouri Job Centers and employers.

MVR is an active member with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation's National Employment Team (NET). This team represents a national network to connect businesses with a footprint in multiple states. It provides MVR with the opportunity to share with and learn from other public vocational rehabilitation agencies.

MVR utilizes the expertise of each State Rehabilitation Council member, which includes individuals typically associated with employers such as professionals from CRPs, CILs, workforce development, business, industry and labor. The council representatives provide valuable input on working with employers to increase competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

MVR is utilizing its business outreach specialists to work with employers on providing paid and unpaid work experiences for youth and students with disabilities. It has been coordinating with employers, school districts, CRPs and CILs to provide summer work experience programs. During 2021, 34 CRPs and 891 VR-eligible students participated in summer work experiences, and nine CILs worked with 58 potentially VR-eligible students. The business outreach specialists work with employers, MU transition specialists and local education agencies on creating work experiences for students with disabilities. This collaboration, known as Groundhog Job Shadow Month, occurs in February. MVR is working with Wonderland Camp, of Rocky Mount, on an internship program. MVR continues to collaborate with its WIOA partners in providing seamless, coordinated services to youth and students with disabilities.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

MVR has an MOU with the Missouri State Medicaid Authority, Missouri Department of Social Services MOHealthNet Division, which considers the requirements of WIOA. This includes coordination of employment activities with the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) Division of Behavioral Health (BH) and Division of Developmental Disabilities (DD), which serve individuals with mental illness, substance use disorders and intellectual disabilities provided under the Medicaid state plan and waivers.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

MVR has an MOU with DMH, the state agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health services, which covers DMH's BH and DD divisions. The agreement outlines the collaboration on existing services, alignment of funding sources, information and data sharing, referrals and on-going development of services.

DMH's BH and MVR work together to increase access to evidence-based supported employment, also known as Individual Placement and Support (IPS), for adults with serious mental illnesses who are interested in improving their work lives. Missouri has 32 Community Mental Health/Treatment Centers (CMHCs) participating in this implementation collaborative. Ongoing technical assistance and fidelity reviews to the evidence-based practice are provided by a state trainer and a team consisting of MVR and DMH employees. The partnership between DMH and MVR includes a training format, offered to interested CMHCs statewide, on adopting IPS and on improving existing employment activities within treatment services. DMH and MVR implemented IPS for youth with serious mental illnesses in several sites.

MVR is partnering with DMH's DD division, and other agencies, to develop a customized employment pilot program that promotes the specific abilities of individuals with disabilities and meets employers' needs.

Additional partnering activities include the sponsoring of an employment summit with the Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare to facilitate clinical integration of behavioral health and community employment efforts and MVR's and DMH BH's co-funding of the customized Missouri benefits planning website DB101.

MVR has appointed a state liaison to collaborate with DMH and the governor's office in a variety of projects and activities. MVR has active participation in many of DMH programs.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

See Section (h)(2).

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

I. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE STATE AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES IN RELATION TO THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY;

MVR developed a system of collecting and analyzing data annually to determine qualified personnel needs. The following information describes the data system utilized in determining personnel/personnel development; recruitment, preparation and retention of

qualified personnel; standards; requirements for vocational rehabilitation counselor (VRC) positions; staff development activities; personnel to address individual communication needs; performance evaluation system; and coordination with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

To assist in determining the number of personnel employed to deliver VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, MVR annually reviews data from its case management system. This information includes the average daily census of individuals served and the number of new applications, individualized plans for employment, successful employment outcomes and cases closed without a successful employment outcome. MVR's human resource section tracks the number of employees and their personnel categories.

The VRCs, district supervisory positions and clerical staff are directly involved in providing services for individuals with disabilities (8 supervisors and assistant supervisors have a partial caseload). The number of individuals who had an open file with MVR as of June 30, 2021 was 11,848. The average number of cases per VRC is approximately 86 per counselor.

MVR's management team reviews each vacancy to determine if the position should be filled, relocated or reclassified to a counselor position (if the position was a different one) based upon factors such as current need and expected population growth. On a regular basis, MVR's goal is to continually evaluate caseload sizes, office workload and staffing to maximize efficiency.

MVR consists of the following sections: Disability Determination, Independent Living, Veterans Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). There are approximately 668 full-time employees in all three sections. This report will focus on the VR section. As of June 30, 2021, the breakdown of the MVR Client Services section needed for service delivery is as follows:

138 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

8 Assistant Supervisors

25 District Supervisors

63 Clerical Support Staff Positions

Administrative Staff:

1 Assistant Commissioner

5 Coordinators

5 Managers

6 Regional Managers

14 Directors (three are shared with all sections of MVR)

1 Human Resource Manager (shared with all sections of MVR)

20 Assistant Directors (3 have partial caseloads)

1 Supervisor

1 Senior HR Analyst

3 Quality Assurance Specialists

1 Senior Accounting Specialist

- 1 Executive Assistant
- 5 Program Specialists
- 1 General Services Specialist
- 5 Business Specialists

II. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND

See Section (i)(1)(A)(i).

III. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.

Based on the 2019 American Community Survey results, 887,896 Missourians have reported that they have some type of disability. The rate of disability is 14.7 percent, which has remained stable from 2015 – 2019. Individuals within this population could be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services in the next five years. MVR estimates that a yearly average of 28,000 individuals will be served in the coming years, including individuals with the most significant disabilities. MVR anticipates approximately 20 VRCs per year will be needed to fill the vacancies from retirements, resignations, or terminations. The total number of VRCs needed for the next five years is approximately 100. MVR estimates that 10 assistant supervisors, 10 district supervisors, 40 clerical support staff and 25 administrative staff may be needed over the next five years to fill vacancies due to turnover and retirements.

Several new positions are being created to handle additional need in the following areas:

- 1 Assistant Director of Mental Health Training
- 1 Assistant Director of Rehabilitation Technology
- 1 Assistant Director of Management and Vendor Services
- 1 Director of Training and Staff Development

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

I. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM;

There is one graduate rehabilitation counselor training program in Missouri. Maryville University in St. Louis, a private institution, offers a master's level degree program in rehabilitation counseling. Graduates of this program are ready to take the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification test and the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) test upon graduation. Maryville University began offering a new program with a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling in September 1999. The program will have approximately 38 students enrolled in the fall 2021 semester, and 15-18 students are expected to graduate from Maryville University by summer 2022. MVR will continue to work closely with Maryville University to recruit and hire potential graduates of the program.

MVR is also working with other graduate counseling programs in Missouri and offers practicum and internship opportunities.

II. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND

See Section (i)(1)(B)(i).

III. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.

See Section (i)(1)(B)(i).

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

MVR works actively in recruiting new counselors with master's degrees in rehabilitation counseling or other related areas. As mentioned above, Missouri has one graduate level rehabilitation counseling program that, at this time, is not sufficient to produce the number of qualified rehabilitation professionals needed by MVR in all areas of the state. Even though graduate enrollment is high at Maryville University, many of the students are not willing to relocate from the St. Louis area. To address this issue, job announcements are sent to other postsecondary institutions that have rehabilitation counseling programs such as Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Emporia State University of Kansas, University of Arkansas, and Missouri universities that offer graduate-level counseling, social work and/or psychology programs.

MVR advertises all openings with the mocareers.mo.gov web page and lists all openings on the agency's website. Additionally, MVR advertises all openings on multiple online job search sites, including Indeed.com, Simply Hired, LinkedIn and US Jobs among others.

MVR sends all job announcements to its state's historically black college, Lincoln University-Jefferson City, Missouri; as well as other historically black colleges such as Southern University-Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Langston University-Langston Oklahoma; and Mississippi State-Starkville, Mississippi.

MVR utilizes a diversity consultant to assist with ongoing staff development activities and outreach to underserved populations around the state. The consultant and the MVR Diversity Team work with MVR staff. The diversity consultant presents training sessions every two years for all staff in each of MVR's 25 offices and training to new counselors. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team, a subcommittee of the MVR Diversity Team, is developing a diversity and inclusion recruitment plan for the agency.

As of June 30, 2021, approximately 15% of all professional staff and 35% of support staff with MVR were persons from diverse backgrounds. MVR also actively recruits individuals with disabilities. District supervisors and VRCs in MVR district offices receive all VRC job notices.

Other disability organizations, including CILs and CRPs, are consulted about recruiting persons with disabilities. Approximately 17% of all professional staff and 7% of support staff with MVR were persons with disabilities.

MVR continues to offer non-paid as well as paid graduate internships for potential employees. MVR also considers candidates who have completed their necessary coursework and need to complete their internship requirement for open positions with the agency. During PY 2020, MVR provided three students with an unpaid practicum and internship experiences to enable the students to complete graduate coursework. MVR was also open to job shadowing.

MVR is involved in a variety of activities to recruit and retain qualified rehabilitation personnel. Recruitment efforts are focused in part on maintaining good relationships with colleges and universities that offer degrees that meet state rule. MVR has a close working relationship with the graduate rehabilitation counselor program at Maryville University. MVR staff attends career fairs, serves as guest speakers, and makes regular contacts and visits to recruit students from the above master's level rehabilitation program. MVR representatives sit on the advisory board at Maryville. Staff development needs and important future training/recruiting issues are discussed at these advisory meetings.

MVR provides a career ladder for counselors rewarding their success and tenure. MVR has a succession plan team that is working on recruitment plans and ideas to retain qualified personnel. Leadership development and capacity building is encouraged statewide through optional training, the Emerging Leaders program, tuition reimbursement, team membership, guidance from MVR's leadership director and other activities. MVR encourages each staff member to view themselves as a leader in their current role.

The MVR team encouraged distribution of "Becoming a Counselor" brochure for potential VRCs, and new VRCs received a welcome letter after they were hired.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

MVR acknowledges the state code: 5 CSR 20-500.140 is the standard in Missouri for the highest degree required for VRCs.

The State of Missouri requires that a qualified VR counselor must have the following minimum qualifications:

- a master's degree from an accredited college or university in rehabilitation counseling, guidance and counseling, psychology, social work, or closely related field; and
- fluency in American Sign Language or other appropriate mode of communication if the counselor provides services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

For individuals whose master's degree is not one of the above areas, MVR requires them to complete a certificate program in rehabilitation counseling.

Of the 138 VRCs currently employed with MVR, there are 125 employees who meet the educational requirements for CFR361.18 and RSMo 337. There are 23 employees who are currently working on a master's degree/certificate program or awaiting approval to begin a program. MVR asks employees to wait at least 11 months prior to beginning their education programs to allow for adequate time to learn the initial duties of the position. MVR has found a higher success rate in performance and education using this methodology.

MVR continues to prioritize the CSPD funding of the above-mentioned VRCs who are involved in university coursework, certification (CRC) and licensure (LPC). MVR is committed to ensuring that VRCs' tuition, fees and books are funded to obtain necessary coursework to meet the above requirements.

The human resource manager (HRM) for MVR develops an individualized plan with each newly hired staff member to identify/evaluate specific staff development needs, required courses, available resources and timelines necessary to achieve the standards in RSMo 337 or the appropriate CRC requirement. The HRM also monitors each staff development plan to ensure that all objectives are met. As necessary, the HRM consults with the state licensing boards and CRC officials. All staff is required to submit updated transcripts to the HRM to ensure compliance with the objectives of the standards.

The above plan is non-discriminatory and encourages the retraining and recruitment of persons with disabilities and from diverse backgrounds.

Annually MVR reviews the performance for rehabilitation staff to determine if they are consistent with the actual job functions, agency values and the Rehabilitation Act mandates. During PY 2020, MVR transitioned from its paper performance evaluation to an electronic evaluation used by all Missouri state agencies. This evaluation is performed quarterly and provides rehabilitation staff with timely feedback on performance and professional development. MVR has a team actively working through the transition to align the evaluation with MVR's mission, vision and professional development goals.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

MVR continuously evaluates its hiring and training processes to ensure that staff has the education and experience necessary to provide a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and needs of individuals with disabilities. As mentioned earlier, MVR uses the state code: 5 CSR 20-500.140 as the standard in Missouri for the highest degree required for VRCs. This basic educational requirement is enhanced with ongoing training for new and experienced counselors focusing on business development/engagement and effective service delivery to individuals with disabilities.

Many newly hired VRCs have had experience working with a CRP partner providing direct employment services to individuals with disabilities. Other new VRCs have previous work experience with an independent living center, job center or a community mental health agency, education settings or social service agencies. Paid or unpaid work experience in helping individuals with disabilities obtain and maintain employment is considered valuable prior work experience.

MVR has a comprehensive professional development system that ensures that its personnel understand the medical and psychosocial aspects of a variety of disabilities. MVR endeavors to

hire counselors who meet the state code: 5 CSR 20-500.140 and prior experience working with individuals with disabilities. MVR augments that with professional development opportunities by providing training focused on specific disabilities. Additionally, MVR sends counselors to conferences that focus on specific disabilities such as the Missouri Brain Injury Association Conference. MVR has statewide and regional specialists that have had extensive training and experience in their area of expertise, e.g., business specialists, mental health, autism, rehabilitation technology, AgrAbility, benefits planning, brain injury, hearing impairments, vision impairments, learning disabilities and self-employment. These specialists are available to provide direct assistance to clients as well as consultation with counselors. All VRCs, regardless of their tenure, have the opportunity to work with a mentor who has expertise and experience in an area that is of interest to them.

MVR's clients have repeatedly expressed the value of having a high-quality rehabilitation counselor in reaching their employment goals. This input is gained through customer satisfaction surveys, individual letters and public hearings. In order to help VRCs assess their client's skills and abilities to obtain and retain employment, MVR has stressed the value of counseling skills. VRCs are encouraged to have a "tool bag" of skills. Primary in this tool bag is the ability to hear and understand clients' goals, provide informed choice and address the specific barriers to successful employment. All professional MVR staff is trained in Motivational Interviewing (MI), an evidence-based practice, which helps clients and VRCs have constructive conversations that identifies their values and goals resulting in an individualized plan to reach their employment goal. Using MI, VRCs and clients identify clients' skills and abilities, the supports that they need to reach their goals, plan for setbacks and challenges, and how successful employment will affect their lives.

MVR has a multi-pronged approach to assist staff with modifying environmental and attitudinal barriers that clients face. Group training and individual assistance is provided to new and existing staff to effectively learn and perform their position. As mentioned earlier, MVR places a high value on the counseling skills of staff. All professional staff and many support staff have received four days of MI training. On-going MI training is available for all staff. MVR offers case management training to new VRCs within the first six months of their employment. New VRCs are also trained to learn to advocate and understand environmental and attitudinal barriers clients face. All counselors are encouraged to maximize resources by knowing and forming relationships with the varied resources in their territories. Many times, these resources provide assistance with environmental and attitudinal barriers. MVR recognizes the value of group trainings but also provides individual assistance to counselors through mentoring and coaching experiences.

Advances in rehabilitation technology are creating opportunities for clients. MVR has statewide and regional specialists who offer expertise in this area. These specialists provide individual consultation and also help staff remain up-to-date with regional trainings. Additionally, MVR utilizes Missouri Assistive Technology for consultation and training purposes.

MVR has been providing additional resources in developing effective relationships with employers in both the public and private sectors. MVR has a team of individuals whose primary responsibility is working with employers and assisting in connecting clients with potential employment. Additionally, all staff is trained and encouraged to develop relationships with businesses. MVR considers employers its partners and works toward helping them address their staffing needs.

MVR looks to the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center for local employment dynamics and labor market information. Job development and placement efforts utilize local

level data to assist clients in making informed choices regarding their career goals, considering wages, turnover rates, current vacancies and areas of job creation. MERIC has provided training to MVR staff to aid them in using their website with clients.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. A SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS WITHIN THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998; AND

MVR has a comprehensive program for in-service training and staff development for all positions. Staff at all levels will attend training in cultural diversity, sexual harassment prevention and customer service. Each new MVR employee completes a hiring checklist process for orientation with his or her supervisor. All new counselors attend New Counselor Training consisting of five monthly sessions, which include orientation, case process, VR services, case and time management, and transition. New counselors also receive training through a Counselor Training Guide and on-the-job training with a supervisor. New administrative staff receive training through the Administrative Training Guide and on-the-job training with a supervisor. Supervisory staff and upper management personnel are required to attend training in leadership, supervision, hiring, interviewing and other training offered through the state or other private sources. MVR is invested in its leadership training program for supervisors and emerging MVR leaders. Many MVR employees have graduated from, and some are currently participating in, the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute. MVR utilizes an internal training consultant who assists in leadership training.

All new counselor and paraprofessional staff, together with their district supervisor, completes the New Counselor Training Manual or New Administrative Staff Training Manual, which assists in the development and understanding of the rehabilitation field and the agency's goals, priorities and responsibilities in serving individuals with disabilities under the federal/state VR program. MVR gathers ad hoc teams to address and evaluate specific staff development needs including topics such as leadership development, training manuals, training evaluations, new counselor orientations, and MI.

In collaboration with Maryville University, MVR developed the Regional Rehabilitation Leadership Academy. This is an annual intra-regional project with the goals of networking, increasing employee engagement, developing leadership skills, and identifying and developing leadership strengths. It was developed as the result of an identified need for supervisor training. Supervisors and employees aspiring to be supervisors from Missouri and three other states are program participants. Rehabilitation Services for the Blind is involved in curriculum planning and sends participants.

In addition to New Employee Orientation, new counseling staff receives training specific to vocational counseling/career development, job development/job placement, vocational services, and case management techniques from MVR staff.

MVR supports staff attendance on an annual basis to the Power Up Conference, which promotes the use and understanding of assistive technology and rehabilitation technology services and

resources across the state. This conference is sponsored by the Missouri Assistive Technology Project (MoAT). MVR convenes an ad hoc assistive technology team when necessary, which assists the agency in staff development activities for assistive technology.

MVR has an assistant director of independent living/rehabilitation technology and an assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing/assistive technology. These staff specialize in assistive technology related to independent living and deaf/HH services. They interact with MoAT and CILs across the state. They attend assistive technology services training and provide resources and information when appropriate to MVR staff. An MVR staff member is a representative on the MoAT Advisory Council.

MVR supports staff attendance at the National AgrAbility Conference. Additionally, statewide training has been provided on services and technology supports for agricultural careers.

Staff attend the Missouri Reentry Conference, which highlights best practices of state agencies and business/community/faith-based organizations serving justice-involved individuals. MVR participates in the Missouri Reentry Process.

MVR staff attend the annual Missouri and Illinois Behavioral Health Conference sponsored by the Missouri Coalition for Community Behavioral Healthcare. The coalition represents Missouri's not-for-profit community mental health centers, which participate in the implementation of Individual Placement and Support services in collaboration with MVR and the Department of Mental Health's Behavioral Health division.

Staff development needs are established in a number of ways. A survey of training needs is administered annually to all counseling and paraprofessional staff to ascertain the needs and interests of all MVR staff. Other methods to determine staff development needs are quality assurance reviews, evaluation of consumer satisfaction surveys, and feedback and recommendations from the State Rehabilitation Council.

Results of the training needs survey are shared with members of the administrative team and regional managers. MVR works to provide training in a variety of ways to accommodate staff needs. Staff members regularly participate in both in-person, virtual/remote, and web-based trainings.

The nature and scope of the staff development program is tied to MVR's overall goals and priorities. MVR is committed to improving staff competencies to ensure that the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, will be fully implemented and the philosophy embraced. MVR training supports the goals and priorities that have been established in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

B. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO DESIGNATED STATE UNIT PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS.

MVR continues to participate and has collaborative relationships with research programs and partner agencies.

Other training areas, which MVR frequently sponsors or staff participate in are

- Motivational Interviewing
- Legal and ethical issues in rehabilitation
- Medical and psychological aspects of disability

- Autism spectrum disorders
- Learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder
- Vocational counseling/assessment
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Informed choice
- Social Security work incentive programs, including Ticket to Work
- Sexual harassment prevention
- Cultural diversity
- Job development/job placement/supported employment
- Transition from school to work and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA issues)
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Rehabilitation technology
- Missouri Rehabilitation Association annual conference
- Leadership training
- Deaf/HH for counselors working with this population
- Individual training requests pertinent to the field of rehabilitation
- Attendance at conferences/workshops related to MVR (e.g., traumatic brain Injury, APSE-MO, Power Up, rehabilitation technology)

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

MVR employs eight vocational rehabilitation counselors for the deaf (RCDs), located throughout Missouri, who are skilled in manual communication for the deaf/HH. Biannually, they gather for training to discuss services and to receive training on deaf/HH topics. MVR employs an assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing who plans and organizes training. Five of the RCDs are deaf or hard of hearing. Each have met CSPD requirements. MVR has additional counselors who have received specialized training on hearing loss to assist in serving deaf/HH clients.

MVR utilize various forms of technology to communicate directly with clients and staff that are deaf/hard of hearing including videophones, email and texting as well as communication apps.

Any approved CRP has qualified staff, or they provide language accommodations or interpreters, to deliver Employment Services Plus to deaf/hard of hearing clients.

Applicants and eligible individuals who have limited English-speaking skills are provided interpreters funded by MVR. All brochures are translated into Spanish so that individuals and

families who speak Spanish have access to information in their native language. At this time, MVR has an assistant district supervisor who is fluent in Spanish in Cape Girardeau. This counselor has assisted with staff development and Hispanic liaison activities. MVR also has staff bilingual in Chinese and Vietnamese. The state has a contract with an over-the-telephone foreign language interpretation service, which MVR has utilized upon occasion for translation.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

MVR works closely with the Office of Special Education and school districts to coordinate staff development activities and services for students with disabilities.

Throughout the year, MVR staff and special education personnel from both the state and local levels focused on participation in special education transition-related trainings/professional development activities. Examples of these activities include attendance and presentations at the DESE Transition Summer Institute, Missouri Council of Administrators of Special Education and Missouri Parents Act's (MPACT) Tools for Life Transition Summit. MVR coordinates opportunities for representatives providing pre-employment transition services to be a part of training and professional development activities. MVR hosted Transition Kickoff events for VRCs and special education teachers around the state. The events were originally held in Kansas City and Springfield and are now being replicated statewide.

The Cooperative Work Experience Program (COOP) agreement is an interagency state and local program between the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Special Education, MVR and Career Education); Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB); and local school districts in the state of Missouri. The agreement is embedded in the state transition MOU and is available for all school districts. The purpose is to facilitate the coordination of transition services from school to post-secondary training and/or employment for students with disabilities who participate in special education programs and are eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services. The MOU outlines roles and responsibilities among participating agencies and school districts in the development of off-campus work experience programs. Through these programs, students with disabilities who are receiving services through an IEP can earn high school credit in accordance with Missouri high school graduation requirements for the number of hours they work in a paid competitive, integrated employment setting. Additionally, MVR continues to work collaboratively with providers and local school districts to meet transition needs of students.

MVR, the Office of Special Education, school personnel and CRP staff are involved in partnership activities, joint training and technical assistance activities. Two assistant directors of transition and section 511 services is a member of the Missouri Interagency Transition Team and an active member of the state's Special Education Advisory Panel. An MVR staff member familiar with transition services is an active member of the MPACT Board.

State Rehabilitation Council: The State Rehabilitation Council reviews and comments on the development of the CSPD plan and related policies.

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

MVR and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) jointly conduct a comprehensive, statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of Missourians with disabilities, over a three-year period. The last assessment was completed in 2021 and covered PY 2018 through PY 2020. The next assessment will be completed in 2024 and cover PY 2021 through PY 2023. MVR submits the results of the needs assessment to the Rehabilitation Services Administration during the four-year combined state plan cycle, two-year modification cycle or anytime circumstances require a modification in accordance with 20 CFR § 676.145. This section pertains to the statewide assessment period completed in 2021 and illustrates all areas of need. The conclusions and recommendations of these assessments are incorporated into MVR's goals and priorities for the purpose of improving services to individuals with disabilities.

MVR uses a mixed methods approach to collect, in aggregate, qualitative and quantitative information on the rehabilitation needs of Missouri individuals with disabilities. Information resources include:

a. Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

MVR routinely surveys a random sample of clients throughout various stages of open cases and case closures to obtain feedback on MVR services and to determine how to better serve the needs of individuals with disabilities.

b. Public Hearings

Annually, MVR conducts public hearings throughout the state to obtain input on the state plan, its key goals and priorities, plan changes and any other topic related to MVR services. In 2021, MVR and the SRC jointly held virtual public hearings statewide.

c. Input from the State Rehabilitation Council

During quarterly and ad hoc committee meetings, the SRC provides input to MVR on the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities.

d. Strategic Teams

MVR utilizes both ad hoc and on-going teams, such as the CRP-MVR Steering Committee Team, Transition Team, and Cultural Diversity Team, to gather data from its partners, school districts and underserved individuals with disabilities.

e. Analysis of Performance Measures and Program Data

On a quarterly basis, MVR management reviews data to ensure the program is meeting its goals. The SRC annually reviews and analyzes this information with MVR and receives quarterly program updates.

f. In 2021, MVR used an online questionnaire to survey its staff on the rehabilitation needs of Missourians with disabilities, including students and youth with disabilities. The MVR Diversity Team reviews the results of the survey in order to make recommendations to administration on how to best utilize the feedback. MVR also reviews information from its annual training needs assessment to determine unmet needs of individuals with disabilities.

g. In 2019, MVR leadership visited all VR district offices and Centers for Independent Living to gather input on the needs of clients and individuals with disabilities.

Additional resources include:

- quality assurance case reviews
- quarterly reviews of case management data
- census data annually or as data is available
- data from the American Community Survey and U.S. Census Bureau
- data from other state and federal agencies
- data from state and community boards and commissions
- information obtained during WIOA partner team meetings
- due process hearings and mediations--annually MVR analyzes feedback from hearings
- literature reviews

Feedback from the public hearings cited that a lack of transportation was a barrier to services. MVR continually reviews this issue for possible resolutions. Offices work with local transportation providers such as OATS and Centers for Independent Living. One of the MVR district offices has a special arrangement with its local public transit agency where the office can order bus passes and provide them directly to clients. Housing, homelessness and affordable childcare were also mentioned.

Considered in this assessment period was the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. MVR expanded its services by adding remote and virtual service options. Staff realized the importance of maintaining client engagement when in-person meetings were not advisable. They quickly adapted to virtual service delivery ensuring the continuation of quality services. MVR worked with its CRP providers to address COVID challenges. MVR temporarily raised its fees for service to offset the providers' additional costs incurred. CRPs were given flexible service delivery options so clients' needs could be met. At the onset of the pandemic, MVR met virtually each week with core and combined state plan partners to share updates on service delivery and keep abreast of partners' COVID-related service initiatives.

The following is a summary of the comprehensive statewide assessment results in response to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in Missouri, particularly the VR service needs of:

(A) individuals with the most significant disabilities (MSD) including their need for supported employment (SE) services

Based on MVR data from the last three years, the projected number of eligible individuals with MSD who will receive MVR services during the state plan period will be approximately 15,000 to 15,300. Of that estimate, approximately 4,500 to 4,550 individuals will need SE services.

From the comprehensive statewide assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of the MSD:

- SE Services -- The nature of the service itself requires an individualized approach based on the needs of an eligible individual. SE services are ongoing support services,

including customized employment, and other appropriate services needed to support an individual with a most significant disability to achieve and maintain competitive integrated employment. SE services include customized employment and IPS. Services are provided by CRPs. MVR can provide up to 24 months of community-based job training.

- Assistive Technology and Rehabilitation Engineering Services -- Services include assessment and recommendations for accommodations, assistive devices and rehabilitation technology necessary to improve the quality of work and/or increase work productivity. Services are usually provided over a four-week period by accredited CRPs and qualified rehabilitation engineers.
- Self-Employment Services -- Individuals with MSD will need assistance in setting up approved business plans for self-employment. These services may include required business equipment, various supplies, rental fees or start-up costs for the plan. Services will be provided by MVR counselors and business consultants as needed.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

(B & C) individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program

An analysis of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment revealed that other than individuals on a waiting list, there are no populations in Missouri that are unserved. MVR counselors refer any individuals on a waiting list to appropriate federal and state programs, including other components of the statewide workforce development system to assist with employment, housing, food and clothing needs.

The needs assessment identified underserved individuals with disabilities as minority populations of Hispanics and African-Americans, individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), and individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Hispanic Population:

Based on MVR data, the projected number of eligible individuals with disabilities who are Hispanic that will annually receive MVR services for PY 2022–2023 will be approximately 254. After analyzing data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Community Survey, MVR feels these individuals are significantly underserved when compared to the total number of Hispanics with disabilities in Missouri.

From the comprehensive needs assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of Missouri's Hispanic population with disabilities:

- Interpreter Services -- These services depend upon the specific needs of clients and are provided by MVR's bilingual MVR staff and state-contracted interpreters. The duration of interpreter services mirrors the length of other services.
- Translated Brochures – MVR has Spanish-translated brochures available on its website.
- Job Placement Services – These services involve specialists who identify and cultivate job placement possibilities in the community. These services offer short-term follow-up support and can last between three and nine months. MVR counselors and CRPs provide job placement services.
- SE Services (see description above)

- Assistive Technology and Rehabilitation Engineering Services (see description above) -- In addition, MVR has a diversity consultant who provides cultural diversity training to all MVR staff. The consultant delivers training specific to each office's population area and assists with developing office plans to address diversity.

African-American Population:

Based on MVR data, the projected number of eligible individuals with disabilities that are African-American who will annually receive MVR services for PY 2022–2023 will be approximately 1,242. MVR data reveals that, as a percentage, there are fewer Caucasians dropping from services than African-Americans; therefore, a percentage of African-Americans receiving services are underserved. In addition, MVR reviewed data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Community Survey. These individuals are underserved when compared to the total number of African-Americans with disabilities in Missouri.

From the comprehensive needs assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of Missouri's African-American population with disabilities:

- Follow-Up Services -- MVR established the need for follow-up services for individuals at risk of dropping out of services. Key MVR staff and MVR intake counselors along with CRPs assist with follow-up services and activities. Clients are contacted to uncover reasons for leaving or barriers to receiving services. Key MVR personnel and CRP staff work with community resources to alleviate any barriers. These follow-up services are implemented before clients' cases are closed and can last between three and nine months. In addition, MVR has a diversity consultant who provides cultural diversity training to MVR staff.

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD):

Based on MVR data, the projected number of eligible individuals with ASD who will annually receive MVR services for PY 2022–2023 will be approximately 997. Other variables could have an effect on this estimate such as the economy and the number of applicants coming into the system. MVR reviewed information and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC); the National Autism Society; NAMI; the Missouri Department of Insurance; The Community Report on Autism 2018; and MVR data. Based on this information and additional research, MVR concludes these individuals are underserved.

From the comprehensive statewide assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of individuals with ASD:

- SE Services (see description above)
- Assistive Technology and Rehabilitation Engineering Services (see description above)
- Job Placement Services (see description above)
- Transition Services -- Transition services assist eligible students and youth with disabilities to successfully prepare them for transitioning into postsecondary education, vocational training or integrated employment. Services can be provided by MVR and coordinated with the Office of Special Education, local school districts and CRPs. Services are provided for the duration of the case.
- Workplace Modifications -- Individuals with ASD may experience difficulties in modulating sensory input. Environmental assessments can be provided to identify distractions such as noise levels, lighting, high traffic areas, etc. Services are provided by

CRPs and can overlap SE services usually lasting nine months, but MVR can provide up to 24 months of community-based job training.

- Employment Services Plus (ESP) -- ESP is designed to assist an individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder-Adult (ASD-A), Brain Injury (BI), and/or Cultural Deafness/hard of hearing (D/HH) who has barriers that require additional supports to achieve a successful employment outcome. ESP provides augmentative services for clients whose disability-related needs exceed the level of support provided by traditional vocational rehabilitation services but does not merit consideration of SE services.
- Other training appropriate to need such as vocational technical school, community college or college.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):

Based on MVR data, the projected number of eligible individuals with TBI who will annually receive MVR services for PY 2022–2023 will be approximately 117. MVR reviewed data from the CDC, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, the Brain Injury Associations of America and Missouri, *2020 Missouri Traumatic Brain Injury Targeted Needs Assessment: Key Findings Report*, and data from brainline.org. Research revealed that Missourians with TBI exceed 16,000. Based on this information and the number of clients with TBI, MVR concludes these individuals are underserved.

From the comprehensive statewide assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of individuals with TBI:

- SE Services (see description above)
- Job Placement Services (see description above)
- Assistive Technology and Rehabilitation Engineering Services (see description above)
- Transition Services (see description above) (data indicated that one of the highest risk groups for TBI was ages 15 to 24)
- ESP Services (see description above)

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Additional individuals that have been identified as underserved are students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems. Research indicates that a large proportion of youth in the juvenile justice system have disabilities. This population is four to five times greater in number than youth with disabilities in public schools. Approximately a third of youth in the juvenile justice system have a disability. There is research that reports approximately 800,000 youth are served in the foster care system. Almost 13 percent have at least one documented disability. It is estimated that 30 to 40 percent of foster youth are in special education. Children in foster care are at greater risk for homelessness. Thirty-one percent of Missouri's foster care youth have been homeless.

MVR is piloting a peer mentoring program to serve students with disabilities in foster care and in the justice system in five locations around the state. Homeless or housing insecure youth with disabilities will also be served through this pilot. It is estimated that between 5 to 10 students or youth will be served in each location.

MVR data for PY 2020 shows 9,928 active cases for age 23 and younger. Of those, 306 (.03%) were coded as foster care illustrating underrepresentation.

From the comprehensive statewide needs assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems and the homeless or housing insecure youth:

- Peer mentoring – This service is included in one of the five required pre-employment transition services, instruction in self-advocacy. It will also cover work readiness, job exploration, postsecondary counseling, and family engagement.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

From the comprehensive needs assessment, MVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system:

- job search assistance
- labor market information
- resume assistance
- case management
- assessment
- individual planning and referral
- educational attainment
- work experiences
- apprenticeships
- customized employment
- support services such as uniforms, steel toed boots, equipment, etc.
- skills development and training
- computer skills training
- transportation assistance
- rehabilitation technology
- hiring and recruiting events

Individuals providing the services are representatives from the Office of Workforce Development and other WIOA program partners.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

In assessing the needs of youth and students with disabilities, research from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition documents unsatisfactory outcomes achieved by youth

with disabilities exiting school. They have difficulty accessing employment, education and community services. There is a need to bridge the information gap between schools, rehabilitation services, community agencies and employers.

Based on December 2020 core data from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary (DESE) Office of Special Education, the number of students, ages 16 to 21 and currently enrolled in school, with individualized education plans (IEPs) is 21,415. This number represents students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for pre-employment transition services or other transition services. MVR further disaggregated this data by MVR district office so that school districts were grouped together based on the MVR office that serves each school. Therefore, the local MVR office knows the specific number of students, ages 16 to 21 with IEPs, for each of the schools that they serve.

MVR has received feedback from many stakeholders such as consumers, parents, school districts and employers regarding the need for services for youth and students with disabilities. There are limited competitive integrated employment opportunities for this population especially in rural areas.

MVR is answering these pre-employment transition needs of eligible or potentially eligible students with multiple strategies that supplement the MVR transition services that have traditionally been provided by its staff and partners. These strategies include summer work experience programs coordinated with CRPs and similar programs with CILs. The VR Summer Work Experience Program was developed in partnership with CRPs. MVR offered paid summer work experience opportunities in integrated settings for VR-eligible students with disabilities. In addition to working, the students received classroom training in soft skills. The CIL Summer Pre-Employment Transition Services Program provided potentially VR-eligible students with disabilities access to job exploration activities, workplace readiness training, social support and instruction on self-advocacy including peer mentoring. MVR collaborated with businesses and school districts to provide services through these programs.

MVR is contracting with the University of Missouri, College of Education, to provide assistance with the provision of pre-employment transition services through regional pre-employment specialists. The university hired 43 specialists, all certified teachers, to work in collaboration with local education agencies and MVR to provide statewide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are potentially eligible for VR services. Eight of the 43 provide pre-employment transition services in the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled.

MVR is working on multiple pilot programs designed to provide peer mentoring for students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems and homeless or housing insecure youth. The pilots include a focus on increasing family engagement. MVR is working with local juvenile justice centers the family court system and the Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division to provide services for this underserved population. Through these programs, MVR is partnering with CILs, the University of Missouri's College of Education, Missouri State University, the Office of Workforce Development and an employer mentor.

MVR funds deaf/hard of hearing students to attend the Rochester Institute of Technology for a pre-employment transition services camp. MVR is also working with Wonderland Camp, of Rocky Mount, on an internship program for both students and youth with disabilities. MVR sponsors students and youth with disabilities to participate in the Governor's Council on Disability Missouri Youth Leadership Forum that focuses on leadership, citizenship, and social and career development skills. MVR is utilizing its business outreach specialists to work with employers on creating work experiences for youth and students with disabilities. And, it is

collaborating with its WIOA partners in providing seamless, coordinated services to youth and students with disabilities.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

- a) Establish new CRPs: MVR does not believe that there is a need to establish new CRPs.
- b) Expand/develop current network of CRPs: No, MVR does not believe that there is a need to expand or develop the current network of CRPs.
- c) Improve CRPs: Yes, MVR has identified the following strategies to improve CRPs within the state:
 - The CRP-MVR steering committee will continue to make recommendations to improve services.
 - Minimum training requirements for CRP staff members have been developed and incorporated into the CRP-MVR Agreement. The CRP-MVR steering committee will monitor implementation of these new requirements and make recommendations as necessary.
 - MVR held four virtual CRP/MVR summits statewide. MVR staff and CRP direct services staff attended the meetings. The purpose of the summits was to enhance communication, promote partnering, share best practices, gather feedback and provide joint training. MVR plans to host the summits on an annual basis.

3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

Research verifies that pathways from school to work or secondary to postsecondary education can be more difficult for individuals with disabilities; therefore, the need for transition career services and pre-employment transition services is great.

DESE reports that for 2019-2020 school year, the percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been:

- enrolled in higher education is 24.6%.
- enrolled in higher education or competitively employed is 57.4%.

This data indicates that there is a need for transition services.

In 2021, MVR surveyed statewide staff to gather information on practices and services for youth with disabilities. Among the findings, staff reported that some of the barriers that youth with disabilities face in obtaining successful employment are a lack of work exposure or work experiences, transportation issues, the absence of parent/family involvement or follow through from parents and students. Feedback indicated that the number of vocational rehabilitation staff was not adequate to serve the number of students.

Feedback has shown that not all school districts are open to enhancing transition services. MVR is utilizing its transition counselors to forge inroads with school districts statewide. It is also working with the University of Missouri, College of Education, through pre-employment services to access all school districts including ones that historically have been hesitant in

enhancing transition services. Additional strategies include an MVR-developed YouTube video, which can be shared with parents and students before, during or after IEP meetings. MVR counselors are present at IEP meetings when invited in order to coordinate services that are a part of the VR individualized plan for employment (IPE). MVR conducted a statewide training for MVR staff on outreach, joint service provision and coordination of IEP/IPE services. New MVR counselor training includes a special education transition coordinator who provides training on IEP development and transition services.

The DESE Graduation Handbook and DESE Transition Agreement include three work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities on an IEP and are coordinated with special education. Students receive high school credit. These three experiences are the COOP Program, employer-based transition training/Project Search for students with most significant disabilities, and unpaid internships.

Any workforce development boards that have youth committees have an MVR representative. MVR is part of the St. Louis County Youth Interagency Partnership, comprised of any organization serving youth in St. Louis County, which was formed to coordinate services so that no youth will fall through the cracks between agencies. MVR is also a part of the Tri-County Youth Task Force, comprised of any organization serving youth in Pettis, Johnson and Henry counties, which replicated the partnership developed in St. Louis County ensuring no youth will be lost between agencies in rural Missouri.

MVR chairs the WIOA Youth Services subcommittee, which is comprised of representatives from the core, combined state plan, and required partners as well as other agencies and organizations. This subcommittee focuses on cross-agency trainings and explores and develops service braiding.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES

According to the 2019 American Community Survey, there are 887,896 Missourians that have some type of disability. The rate of disability in the state is 14.7 percent. This rate has remained stable from 2015 – 2019. Individuals within this population could be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services during FFY 2022 and FFY 2023.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

The estimated number of eligible individuals who will receive services under the MVR program is 27,900 in FFY 2022 and 28,000 in FFY 2023.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

The estimated number of eligible individuals who will receive services under the Supported Employment program is 4,500 in FFY 2022 and 4,550 in FFY 2023. These estimates are included in the total estimates in (k)(2)(A) above.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION.

The estimated number of eligible individuals who will receive services under each priority category is as follows:

FFY 2022: Priority Category 1: 13,800; Priority Category 2: 13,800; Priority Category 3: 300

FFY 2023: Priority Category 1: 13,900; Priority Category 2: 13,800; Priority Category 3: 300

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

Priority Category 3 is closed with a moving waiting list for Priority Category 2. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection is estimated to be between 65–650 for this plan period.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

The estimated cost of serving the above eligible individuals in the VR and Supported Employment programs will be approximately \$77,000,000 in FFY 2022 and \$78,000,000 in FFY 2023. As described in section (m), Order of Selection, of the VR services portion of this state plan, MVR is currently in an order of selection. The estimated cost of services for each priority category is as follows:

FFY 2022: Priority Category 1: \$37,800,000; Priority Category 2: \$37,800,000; Priority Category 3: \$1,400,000

FFY 2023: Priority Category 1: \$38,500,000; Priority Category 2: \$38,100,000; Priority Category 3: \$1,400,000

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO BY THE STATE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, IF THE STATE HAS A COUNCIL, AND JOINTLY AGREED TO ANY REVISIONS

MVR's PY 2021 goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed upon by MVR and the SRC, as described in section (a), Input of the State Rehabilitation Council, of the VR services portion of this state plan.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

The following goals and priorities for MVR are as follows:

Goal 1: Increase the number of participants receiving training services.

Baseline data: PY 2019: 7,359 PY 2020: 6,993

Objective: Maximize the potential of those we serve.

Strategies:

1. Emphasize career pathways, ensuring integration in staff training.
2. Expand middle skills pilot program for training services in collaboration with the Office of Workforce Development and Career and Technical Education.
3. Simplify postsecondary training authorization process.

Goal 2: Increase the number of students with disabilities who access VR services.

Baseline data: PY 2019: 18,760 PY 2020: 17,128

Objective: Make pre-employment transition services and traditional VR services available to Missouri students with disabilities.

Strategies:

1. Increase number of high schools that VR and its providers engage.
2. Expand pre-employment transition services to justice and foster care involved and homeless or housing insecure students with disabilities in pilot locations.
3. Develop regional interagency partnerships focused on agencies serving youth.
4. Coordinate services with workforce development programs that target youth.

Goal 3: Strengthen relationships with employers across Missouri.

Baseline: MVR is currently developing a system to capture employer services.

Objective: Provide more opportunities to those we serve.

Strategies:

1. Connect candidates to employers recruiting for apprenticeship opportunities.
2. Identify and connect with businesses offering career pathways paying above median wage.
3. Expand Nexus groups across the state to strengthen WIOA partnerships and gain access to employers.
4. Utilize the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) to connect candidates to employers.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

As noted above, MVR and the SRC jointly developed the goals and priorities, which were based on an analysis of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA), a review of the new performance accountability measures and other input from stakeholders and resources. The CSNA was expanded to include an assessment of the needs of students and youth with disabilities. In determining goals and priorities, MVR reviewed its data on the new performance accountability measures. Other input was considered as well in the development of the goals and priorities as listed in section (3)(C) below.

In developing its goals and priorities, MVR analyzed information and results obtained from the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, which can be found in section (j) Statewide Assessment. The CSNA revealed that youth with disabilities need guidance with job exploration, work-based learning experiences, exploring opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive or postsecondary educational programs, workplace readiness training and instruction in self-advocacy. Findings indicate that this population has difficulty accessing employment, education and community services, and that youth need to develop the skills necessary to prepare for, obtain, retain or advance in competitive, integrated employment. MVR has made it a priority to improve outcomes for youth with disabilities as evidenced in the

setting of goals and objectives in previous and its current state plan. The assessment also indicated that justice and foster care involved and homeless or housing insecure students with disabilities are an underserved population. MVR set a strategy to expand pre-employment transition services based on this population's need.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

MVR reviewed the requirements for the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA when goals and priorities were in development. Available data was taken into consideration. MVR is collecting and reporting data for the first five performance accountability indicators, which will be negotiated. The departments are piloting approaches for measuring the sixth indicator, Effectiveness in Serving Employers. For the PY 2020 – 2023 state plan, VR agencies were required to only report an expected level of performance for measurable skill gains (MSG). MVR negotiated 20% as its level of performance for this measure. MVR exceeded its negotiated level of performance with 43.7% for PY 2019 and 78% for PY 2020. Baseline data was allowed for indicators one through four.

MVR collaborated with its core partners to determine a performance indicator for Effectiveness in Serving Employers. Missouri chose Repeat Business Customers and Employer Penetration Rate as its measure of performance. The core partners continue data collection for this indicator.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

Other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program utilized in the development of the goals and priorities are:

- State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) input and recommendations
- RSA monitoring feedback from the Section 107 Monitoring Review
- anticipated performance under section 116 of WIOA
- other sources, e.g., CRPs' legislative input, consumer satisfaction surveys, input from the Client Assistance Program and public hearings

The goals and priorities for carrying out the supported employment program can be found in section (n) of the VR services portion of this plan titled Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI funds.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES

MVR is currently in an order of selection.

Services shall be provided based upon the eligible individual's placement in one of the following priority categories:

Priority Category I: An individual with the most significant disability as defined below.

Priority Category II: An individual with a significant disability as defined below.

Priority Category III: An individual with a disability as defined below.

Definitions:

Individual with the Most Significant Disability: An individual with a significant disability who is seriously limited in three or more of the following functional areas: self-care, communication, mobility, self-direction, work tolerance, work skills, and/or interpersonal skills.

Individual with a Significant Disability: An individual with a disability who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or two functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance and/or work skills;

a. whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and

b. who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord conditions (including paraplegia and quadriplegia), sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

Individual with a disability: all other eligible individuals with a disability.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

From 2010 to 2018, MVR was able to keep the waiting list cleared for the most part. However, MVR continues to experience an increase in the cost of providing services to persons in all categories. The program is experiencing a rise in the costs associated with spending 15% of the federal grant on pre-employment transition services, carrying out Section 511 requirements, Missouri Job Center infrastructure funding agreements, and an increase in expenditures resulting from an increase in Missouri's minimum wage. Due to the increase in cost of services MVR may not be able to provide services to all eligible individuals. MVR estimates that there will be 27,900 eligible individuals in FFY 2022 and 28,000 in FFY 2023 who will receive services.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS

The estimated number of eligible individuals who will receive services under each priority category is as follows:

FFY 2022: Priority Category 1: 13,800; Priority Category 2: 13,800; Priority Category 3: 300

FFY 2023: Priority Category 1: 13,900; Priority Category 2: 13,800; Priority Category 3: 300

The estimated number of eligible individuals who will exit with employment outcomes after receiving services is as follows:

FFY 2022: Priority Category 1: 2,700; Priority Category 2: 2,000; Priority Category 3: 50

FFY 2023: Priority Category 1: 2,725; Priority Category 2: 2,025; Priority Category 3: 50

The estimated number of eligible individuals who will exit without employment outcomes after receiving services is as follows:

FFY 2022: Priority Category 1: 2,300; Priority Category 2: 1,550; Priority Category 3: 50

FFY 2023: Priority Category 1: 2,275; Priority Category 2: 1,525; Priority Category 3: 50

D. TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER; AND

The timeline to reach an employment outcome varies significantly with each individual. It is estimated that the average number of months to reach an employment outcome for priority category I is approximately 22 months, priority category II is approximately 27 months, and priority category III is approximately 13 months.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

MVR serves eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities (Priority Category 1) first. Eligible individuals with significant disabilities (Priority Category 2) are served next, followed by eligible individuals with disabilities (Priority Category 3).

The following procedures will be followed in the implementation of the order of selection:

- 1) An eligible individual will be placed in the appropriate priority category and receive written notification of the assigned priority category. The eligible individual's date of application will be used to determine the order of services within a priority category.
- 2) Individuals will be notified of their right to appeal their category assignment.
- 3) An eligible individual's placement in a priority category may be changed under justifiable circumstances.
- 4) Rationale for placement will appear in the individual's case file.
- 5) The order of selection shall in no way affect the provision or authorization of diagnostic and evaluation services needed to determine eligibility.
- 6) Services authorized or provided to any eligible individual shall not be disrupted as a result of an order of selection or the closing of a priority category.
- 7) All funding arrangements for providing services, including any third-party arrangements and awards by MVR, shall be consistent with the order of selection. If any funding arrangements are inconsistent with the order of selection, MVR shall renegotiate these funding arrangements so that they are consistent with the order of selection.
- 8) The order of selection shall in no way affect eligible individuals' access to services provided through MVR's information and referral system.
- 9) Eligible individuals who are in a priority category that is not open shall be provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, including counseling and referral for job

placement, using appropriate modes of communication to assist them in preparing for, securing, retaining, regaining or advancing in employment. These individuals will also be referred to other appropriate federal and state programs, including components of the statewide workforce system.

10) Individuals being referred to appropriate programs, as mentioned above, shall be provided the following:

(A) A notice of the referral to the agency carrying out the program

(B) Information identifying a specific point of contact within the agency to which the individual is being referred

(C) Information and advice regarding the most suitable services to assist the individual to prepare for, secure, retain, regain or advance in employment

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT

MVR has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The state plan goals and priorities for the distribution of funds from section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services are:

Goal 1: Maintain high quality supported employment services.

Strategies:

1. Identify and share best case practices around providing supported employment services.
2. Continue to provide training through annual CRP Summits.

Goal 2: Implement collaborative programs to promote braiding of services within the statewide workforce development system.

Strategies:

1. Continue to provide and expand IPS services statewide in partnership with the Department of Mental Health-Behavioral Health Division.
2. Pilot Customized Employment service delivery in partnership with the Department of Mental Health-Developmental Disabilities Division.

Title VI funds are utilized for supported employment services through a fee-for-service as established in MVR's supported employment cost analysis. Title I funds are also utilized for the provision of supported employment services.

It is estimated that the number of eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities who will receive supported employment services during FFY 2022 is 4,500 and FFY 2023 is 4,550. It is also estimated that MVR will spend Title I funds of \$7,400,000 in FFY 2022 and \$7,500,000 in

FFY 2023 on supported employment services. These services will be provided through nonprofit, accredited CRPs.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

MVR focuses on delivering services that result in competitive, integrated employment. It can provide or arrange for extended services for a period not to exceed four years. However, to leverage funding, it relies on community rehabilitation providers and community organizations for the provision of supported employment services, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities or until the youth turns 25 years of age, whichever comes first. These services and activities may include job coaching, job supports (both on and off the job), guidance and counseling, retention services, resources for benefits counseling, information and referral, and employer consultation.

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

MVR continues to work the DMH-DD division in utilizing home and community-based waivers to increase supported employment and extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities. It will continue to work closely with the Missouri Department of Social Services MOHealthNet Division and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities divisions to ensure that youth with the most significant disabilities are receiving extended services.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

All strategies identified to achieve goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities and overcome barriers to accessing the VR and the supported employment programs in this plan period are listed below and are current. The following strategies have been developed and reviewed by MVR and the State Rehabilitation Council:

VR Program

Goal 1: Increase the number of participants receiving training services.

Baseline data: PY 2019: 7,359 PY 2020: 6,993

Objective: Maximize the potential of those we serve.

Strategies:

1. Emphasize career pathways, ensuring integration in staff training.

2. Expand middle skills pilot program for training services in collaboration with the Office of Workforce Development and Career and Technical Education.

3. Simplify postsecondary training authorization process.

Goal 2: Increase the number of students with disabilities who access VR services.

Baseline data: PY 2019: 18,760 PY 2020: 17,128

Objective: Make pre-employment transition services and traditional VR services available to Missouri students with disabilities.

Strategies:

1. Increase number of high schools that VR and its providers engage.

2. Expand pre-employment transition services to justice and foster care involved and homeless or housing insecure students with disabilities in pilot locations.

3. Develop regional interagency partnerships focused on agencies serving youth.

4. Coordinate services with workforce development programs that target youth.

Goal 3: Strengthen relationships with employers across Missouri.

Baseline: MVR is currently developing a system to capture employer services.

Objective: Provide more opportunities to those we serve.

Strategies:

1. Connect candidates to employers recruiting for apprenticeship opportunities.

2. Identify and connect with businesses offering career pathways paying above median wage.

3. Expand Nexus groups across the state to strengthen WIOA partnerships and gain access to employers.

4. Utilize the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) to connect candidates to employers.

Supported Employment Program

Goal 1: Maintain high quality supported employment services.

Strategies:

1. Identify and share best case practices around providing supported employment services.

2. Continue to provide training through annual CRP Summits.

Goal 2: Implement collaborative programs to promote braiding of services within the statewide workforce development system.

Strategies:

1. Continue to provide and expand IPS services statewide in partnership with the Department of Mental Health - Behavioral Health Division.

2. Pilot Customized Employment service delivery in partnership with the Department of Mental Health - Developmental Disabilities Division.

All of the above strategies will be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS

The following strategies will be utilized:

1. MVR will work jointly with CRPs and other partnering agencies, including WIOA partners, to develop and sponsor on-going training in rehabilitation technology services.
2. At any time during the rehabilitation process, MVR's statewide rehabilitation technology specialists will provide technical assistance to MVR counselors.
3. MVR has developed an ad hoc rehabilitation technology team to help clients meet their rehabilitation technology needs.
4. MVR staff will participate in activities, training programs and conferences sponsored by Missouri Assistive Technology.
5. MVR utilizes several rehabilitation technology projects, located at various Centers for Independent Living statewide, which have demonstration centers for exploring, reviewing and demonstrating various rehabilitation technology devices, services and resources.
6. MVR will continue to work with the rehabilitation technology needs of farm operators with disabilities and consult with staff statewide.
7. Biannually, MVR's vocational rehabilitation counselors for the deaf gather for training and to discuss new strategies, resources and issues for deaf and hard of hearing clients. MVR's assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing services plans and organizes the training.
8. MVR's assistant director of deaf and hard of hearing services will continue providing statewide support for staff with assistive technology services for clients with hearing impairments.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM

1. MVR will recruit rehabilitation counselors from culturally diverse backgrounds to better serve individuals with significant disabilities from underserved populations.
2. MVR will utilize state-contracted interpreters to reduce communication barriers.
3. MVR will continue to translate brochures in Spanish for the Hispanic community.
4. MVR's diversity consultant will provide cultural diversity training to MVR staff and deliver training to each MVR office. In addition, the consultant will continue to lead the Diversity Team, which includes MVR staff.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES)

The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services) can be found under VR Program, Goal 2, strategies 1 – 4 in section (o) above. These methods are also described in sections (d) and (j) within this plan.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE

The specific strategies that will be used to improve CRPs can be found under the Supported Employment Program, Goal 1, strategy 2 above in section (o) and in section (j). In addition, MVR and CRP staffs offer input on service delivery processes during partnering meetings and develop action plans to improve those processes. The CRP-MVR steering committee meets regularly to review progress on these processes, service delivery and to discuss current and future issues warranting attention. This effort, along with joint training activities, is beneficial to improving both the CRP and MVR programs.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

MVR developed strategies to improve the agency's performance with regard to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

With staff input, MVR created Program Year Priorities to align with the performance accountability measures. The priorities focus on individuals with disabilities achieving long-term retention and higher wages by (1) utilizing a career pathways approach to vocational planning, promoting opportunities to access postsecondary training services, (3) serving potentially eligible students, (4) engaging in continuous outreach efforts, (5) documenting the provision of VR services accurately, and (6) creating employment opportunities through strong community partnerships.

These priorities guided the development of the strategies listed below.

1. The MVR Business Team is strengthening relationships with employers across Missouri by

- connecting candidates to employers recruiting for apprenticeship opportunities;
- identifying and connecting with businesses offering career pathways paying above median wage;
- expanding Nexus groups across the state to strengthen WIOA partnerships and gain access to employers; and
- utilizing the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) to connect candidates to employers.

2. Training Initiatives

MVR focuses training efforts on capturing the services it provides in its case management system for accurate reporting to the Rehabilitation Services Administration and to reflect staff's work to improve data entry performance.

3. Usage of Data

- MVR is utilizing a data interface for secondary education information to assist in capturing all education data.

- MVR is analyzing a data interface to capture postsecondary data.
- MVR's data interface with the state's Unemployment Insurance wage allows access to post wage data.
- MVR tailors its internal data management reports to generate information on its performance with regard to section 116 of WIOA.

4. Expanding work-based learning opportunities to include progressive employment.

MVR is expanding its work-based services to include the progressive employment model. This model provides participants paid work experiences in a supportive environment by offering supports to both the participant and the employer. It utilizes labor market information to assure the vocational goal is in a stable and/or growing occupation, is above minimum wage, and has the potential for career pathways and credential attainment. In addition to the paid work experience, this model continues to support the participant and help with job development, placement, and retention services.

MVR is collaborating, cooperating and coordinating with WIOA partners to work on methods to align data systems, share referrals and determine common intake practices. It will review the performance of the state with respect to the performance accountability measures with WIOA partners to ensure measures are consistent throughout the core programs. Efforts will be directed at cross training to educate partner staff on each other's programs. MVR will be analyzing methods to work with partners on braided services among programs.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

MVR will continue to work with OWD, which provides the statewide workforce development system services through the Missouri Job Centers in 14 workforce regions. MVR has appointed a state liaison to collaborate with OWD, and MVR staff serves as active members on all 14 local workforce development boards.

Through Memoranda of Understanding, MVR is an important referral source from job center partners for individuals with disabilities. MVR counselors visit various Missouri Job Centers (both full service sites and satellites) frequently to provide services to individuals in a timely fashion. MVR will work with partners in learning what services are available and how to capitalize on resources and processes already in place.

MVR is working closely with all of the WIOA partners in order to avoid duplication of services and provide the best services possible for consumers. Many teams, consisting of members from all of the partner programs, are meeting and developing methods to meet individuals' needs.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

MVR obtains input on goals and priorities from the comprehensive statewide needs assessment, which includes the feedback from the SRC, public hearings and consumer satisfaction surveys. This information is given to the administrative and strategic teams to develop strategies. MVR utilizes a variety of teams to assist with the development and implementation of many of the strategies identified in this section. Team members include MVR staff, management, providers, former consumers and school personnel. Quality assurance reviews are also used to assess the

progress of the strategies toward the targets. MVR's Management Team monitors outcomes and progress toward goals on a regular basis.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

MVR continues to support innovation and expansion activities through its commitment to supported employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. MVR, in partnership with Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind and Missouri Department of Mental Health – Division of Developmental Disabilities (DMH-DD), collaborated to develop a customized employment pilot program. It is a cross-agency delivery model that focuses on an individual's unique strengths, needs and interests. The pilot promotes the specific abilities of the individual and meets employer needs through flexible strategies. MVR is paying for staff training and technical assistance.

MVR is also supporting innovation and expansion activities through its work on multiple pilot programs designed to provide peer mentoring for students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems and homeless or housing insecure youth. The pilots include a focus on increasing family engagement. MVR is working with local juvenile justice centers or the family court system and the Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division to provide services for this underserved population. Through these programs, MVR is partnering with CILs, the University of Missouri's College of Education, Missouri State University, the Office of Workforce Development and an employer mentor.

MVR will utilize innovation and expansion funds to support activities of the Missouri State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council pursuant to 34 CFR section §361.35.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

MVR developed the strategies below to overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the state VR program and the state supported employment services program.

MVR employs a diversity consultant to assist with improving services to underserved populations, developing training programs, and establishing outreach strategies for individuals from diverse cultures. The consultant presents diversity training sessions for all MVR office staff and during new counselor training. The consultant also leads the Cultural Diversity Team comprised of VR management and district office staff. This team is dedicated to acknowledging diversity barriers and developing training to address these issues. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team, a subcommittee of the MVR Diversity Team, is developing a diversity and inclusion recruitment plan for the agency. Civility training is another strategy utilized to overcome these barriers as well as staff training opportunities on cultural competency that cover aspects of diversity.

To address barriers to services for students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems, along with homeless and housing in-secure youths, MVR created pilot projects to provide peer mentoring. These individuals have been identified as underserved populations.

MVR developed Employment Services Plus to assist individuals with autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury or deafness/hearing loss who require additional supports to reach successful outcomes.

MVR works with DMH-DD and community rehabilitation programs to provide a customized employment pilot program for individuals who have not been able to achieve or maintain competitive, integrated employment. Some of the individuals in the program have encountered barriers to traditional VR services. The pilot promotes the specific abilities of the individual and identifies effective strategies to meet employer needs.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

Strategies that contributed to the achievement of or factors that impeded the achievement of the PY 2019 Goals and Priorities established by MVR and the State Rehabilitation Council were as follows:

Goal 1: Increase the number of employment outcomes for youth with disabilities.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal not met.

The number of employment outcomes for youth with disabilities at the end of:

PY 2018: 1,858; PY 2019: 1,756

Goal 2: Increase competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with ASD.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal not met.

The number of employment outcomes for individuals with ASD at the end of:

PY 2018: 442; PY 2019: 442

Goal 3: Expand services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness receiving Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal not met.

The number of individuals with severe and persistent mental illness receiving IPS service authorizations (open/closed) at the end of:

PY 2018: 1,705; PY 2019: 1,118

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

During PY 2019, MVR closed the same number of ASD cases and marginally fell short of its goals for employment outcomes for youth with disabilities and for the number of individuals with severe and persistent mental illness receiving IPS services compared to PY 2018. The last quarter of PY 2019 was the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic. Numbers across the board were lower than anticipated as would be expected due to unprecedented circumstances. Though state agencies were closed to the public for a period of time, MVR met the challenges by providing services remotely. Clients continued to be served and received quality services; however, the public did not seek assistance at the same level as prior to the pandemic.

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

PY 2019 Goals for the Supported Employment Program and strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals were as follows:

Goal 1: Monitor and evaluate MVR's supported employment outcome-based model.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal met.

MVR has produced extensive work through the CRP-MVR steering committee team in order to maximize benefits for supported employment (SE), which includes the IPS services. MVR and the CRPs developed and implemented an outcome-based SE model.

MVR revised its cooperative agreement with CRPs to align with the outcome-based model. This agreement includes service provision, authorization, billing, compliance and verification processes.

Goal 2: Research the efficiency and effectiveness of braided programs with Workforce Development.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal met.

MVR initiated the creation of a braiding services team, comprised of WIOA core and combined state plan partners and other entities that serve individuals with disabilities, to develop methods and strategies to support collaboration between partner agencies, promote greater understanding of the services provided by each agency, and discover methods to avoid duplication of services.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

All goals and priorities were met.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

MVR is collecting and reporting data for the first five performance accountability indicators, which will be negotiated. The departments are piloting approaches for measuring the sixth indicator, Effectiveness in Serving Employers. For the PY 2020 – 2023 state plan, VR agencies were required to only report an expected level of performance for measurable skill gains (MSG). MVR negotiated 20% as its level of performance for this measure. MVR exceeded its negotiated level of performance with 43.7% for PY 2019 and 78% for PY 2020. Baseline data was allowed for indicators one through four.

MVR collaborated with its core partners to determine a performance indicator for Effectiveness in Serving Employers. Missouri chose Repeat Business Customers and Employer Penetration Rate as its measure of performance. The core partners continue data collection for this indicator.

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED

MVR continues to support innovation and expansion activities through its commitment to supported employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. MVR, in partnership with Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind and Missouri Department of Mental Health – Division of Developmental Disabilities (DMH-DD), collaborated to develop a customized employment pilot program. It is a cross-agency delivery model that focuses on an individual's unique strengths, needs and interests. The pilot promotes the specific abilities of the individual and meets employer needs through flexible strategies. MVR is paying for staff training and technical assistance.

MVR is also supporting innovation and expansion activities through its work on multiple pilot programs designed to provide peer mentoring for students with disabilities involved in the justice and foster care systems and homeless or housing insecure youth. The pilots include a focus on increasing family engagement. MVR is working with local juvenile justice centers or the family court system and the Missouri Department of Social Services Children's Division to provide services for this underserved population. Through these programs, MVR is partnering with CILs, the University of Missouri's College of Education, Missouri State University, the Office of Workforce Development and an employer mentor.

MVR utilized Part B, Title I funds for the SRC and Part B, Title VII funds for the SILC quarterly meetings. These funds were primarily used to pay for council members' travel, meeting expenses, and supplies. MVR expended \$37,681.50 on SILC activities in PY 2020.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

MVR maintains cooperative, written agreements with nonprofit, private CRPs to provide services on a fee-for-service basis. All supported employment (SE) fees authorized by MVR are a uniform, flat rate as recommended by the RSA 107 Monitoring Review.

SE on-the-job support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, are provided with SE grant dollars only after job placement. MVR routinely expends its SE grant allotment after which Title I funds are utilized.

Other services, which support individuals seeking supported employment, that lead up to job placement, must be paid with Title I funds. These may include:

- discovery and exploration;
- survey of businesses and assurance of potential community-based exploration, assessments and work sites suited to the needs of the clients;
- analysis of all relevant job-related variables, (e.g., transportation, job restructuring, tax credit for employers, etc.);
- development of an internal advocacy system;
- provision of long-term, extended services support with the client or employer a minimum of twice per month; and
- customized employment for individuals and employers.

MVR is committed to providing greater access to SE services. The scope of SE services reaches throughout the state. All counties in Missouri are being served by CRPs that provide SE services.

MVR district offices meet with local CRPs to outline joint activities to assist mutual consumers reach employment outcomes. MVR and CRP staffs both offer input on service delivery processes during partnering meetings and develop action plans to improve those processes. Other collaborative activities involve joint training programs.

One of the methods that MVR uses to continuously improve SE services and the service delivery process is through the use of a strategic team. The CRP-MVR steering committee meets regularly to improve services, review feedback, monitor progress and to discuss current and future issues warranting attention.

MVR and the CRPs developed an outcome-based service model that emphasizes quality employment outcomes and retention.

DMH-BH and MVR have been working to increase access to evidence-based supported employment, also known as IPS, for adults with serious mental illnesses who are interested in improving their work lives. Missouri has 32 Community Mental Health Centers participating in this implementation collaborative. DMH and MVR are implementing IPS for youth with serious mental illnesses in several sites.

Fifty (50) percent of MVR's SE grant allotment must be reserved and expended on the provision of SE services, including extended services, to youth with the most significant disabilities. MVR can provide up to 24 months of SE on-the-job supports after placement and may extend services, if necessary.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES

Extended services are provided after the provision of supported employment and when job coaching falls below 10 percent. MVR utilizes CRPs or identified long-term providers for the provision of extended services that continue after case closure. This includes but is not limited to, at minimum, two contacts with the consumer each month. Extended services may be provided to youth with most significant disabilities for a period not to exceed four years, or until the individual turns 25 and no longer meets the definition of a youth, whichever comes first. MVR utilizes CRPs or identified long-term providers for the provision of extended services for youth with most significant disabilities that continue after case closure to support the consumer's needs.

Once a supported employment case is closed, MVR no longer funds extended services. The CRP or other identified provider is responsible for securing long-term funding.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL) CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY WIOA[14], AND ITS SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT[15];

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

2. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY)[16] AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[17] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[18] , POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER SECTION 111 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[19] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[20] , POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND/OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Timothy E. Gaines

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Assistant Commissioner, Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

FOOTNOTES

[14] Public Law 113-128.

[15] Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

[16] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[17] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[18] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations.

[19] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[20] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Signatory information | Enter Signatory information in this column |
| Name of Signatory | [Timothy E. Gaines] |
| Title of Signatory | [Assistant Commissioner, Office of Adult Learning and Rehabilitation Services] |
| Date Signed | [March 9, 2022] |

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

| | |
|--|---------|
| The State Plan must include | Include |
| 1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. | |

| | |
|--|---------|
| The State Plan must include | Include |
| 2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140. | |
| 3. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: | |
| 3.a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 3.b. The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (A or B must be selected): | |
| 3.b.(A) "is an independent State commission" (Yes/No) | No |
| 3.b.(B) "has established a State Rehabilitation Council" (Yes/No) | Yes |
| 3.c. Consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 3.d. The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3) | |
| 3.e. The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds (Yes/No) | No |
| 3.f. The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs (Yes/No) | No |
| 3.g. Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan | No |
| 3.h. The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 3.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act | |

| The State Plan must include | Include |
|---|---------|
| 3.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 3.k. The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 3.l. The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities | |
| 3.m. The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will: | |
| 4.a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 4.b. Impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 4.c. Provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No) | No |
| 4.d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 4.e. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 4.g. Provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 4.h. Comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act | |

| The State Plan must include | Include |
|---|---------|
| 4.i. Meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs | |
| 4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State, | |
| 4.j.i. Has developed and will implement, | |
| 4.j.i.I. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and | |
| 4.j.i.II. Strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and | |
| 4.j.ii. Has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)) | |
| 5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement: | |
| 5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 5.c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act | |
| 6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program: | |
| 6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act | |

| | |
|--|---------|
| The State Plan must include | Include |
| 7. Provision of Supported Employment Services: | Yes |
| 7.a. The Designated State Agency Assures That it Will Provide Supported Employment Services as Defined in Section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 7.b. The designated State agency assures that: | |
| 7.b.i. The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act | |
| 7.b.ii. An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act | |

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

| Performance Indicators | PY 2022 Expected Level | PY 2022 Negotiated Level | PY 2023 Expected Level | PY 2023 Negotiated Level |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Employment (Second Quarter After Exit) | 58.8% | 58.8% | 58.8% | 60.0% |
| Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit) | 54.5% | 54.5% | 54.5% | 55.0% |
| Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit) | \$5,435.00 | \$5,450.00 | \$5,435.00 | \$5,550.00 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 24.0% | 28.0% | 24.0% | 29.0% |
| Measurable Skill Gains | 65.0% | 77.9% | 65.0% | 78.0% |
| Effectiveness in Serving Employers | Not Applicable ¹ | Not Applicable ¹ | Not Applicable ¹ | Not Applicable ¹ |

¹

“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.